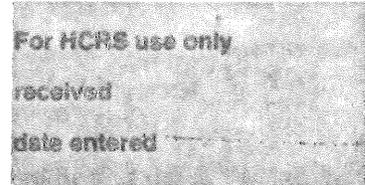


OMB 1024-0018
EXP 12-31-84

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



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

1. Name

historic LaGrange

and/or common Robards-Royster House

2. Location

street & number North side SR 1308
0.8 miles East of junction with NC 39 _____ not for publication

city, town Harris Crossroads _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district Second

state North Carolina code 037 county Vance code 181

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input 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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Dr. Thomas Royster

Richard Henry Correll

street & number 231 Indian Harbor Road, Johns Island

116 Duncombe Ct.

city, town Vero Beach

Cozy

state Florida

NC 27511

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Vance County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Henderson

state North Carolina 27536

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Architectural & Historical Resources of the Tar-Neuse River Basin has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1977 _____ federal _____ state county _____ local

depository for survey records Survey & Planning Branch, Division of Archives & History

city, town Raleigh

state North Carolina 27611

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Sitting on a stone foundation among the soybean and tobacco fields of rural Vance County is the mid-nineteenth-century house known as La Grange. It is the seat of a once extensive plantation which still contains 131 acres of farmland. The two-story front portion of the frame house is of simple Greek Revival character with Italianate brackets. It is three-bays wide by two-bays deep with two interior chimneys. An ell of uncertain date has been added to the northeast rear portion. Except for a small amount of beaded siding covering random areas, the house is sheathed in plain weatherboarding. The form and bracketed detail of the house bear some similarities to the 1850s work of Warrenton builder Jacob W. Holt, but there are also deviations from Holt's vocabulary. Whether he or perhaps a former associate had an influence on this house remains uncertain.

A full one-story porch extends across the front of the house and features a bracket cornice and square fluted columns with bracketed caps. Pilasters with bracketed caps define the northwest and southeast corners of the main house. The pilasters carry a wide cornice with sparsely placed brackets. The asymmetrical front entrance, located slightly right of center, consists of two four-paneled wooden doors surrounded by a transom and side lights containing colored glass and diamond-patterned muntins. Above the door, on the upper story, is a triple window. All windows on the front portion of the house have six-over-six sash with the exception of the narrow panes in the triple window which are two-over-two.

The rear ell appears to be older than the front section of the house, possibly of the Federal period. However, Miss Nancy Wade, who grew up at La Grange, maintains that her great-grandfather insisted that the ell was added, by a black carpenter. This section contains two windows, six-over-nine; but where in the front section the lower windows are wider than the upper ones, the reverse is true of the windows in the ell. An enclosed porch extends across the rear of the Greek Revival section. It appears to be of nineteenth century date as well.

The front portion of the house has a center-hall plan two rooms deep. The front rooms are much larger than those in the rear, but all have high ceilings with tall windows. Simple Greek Revival finish occurs consistently throughout.

In the hall a stair with a round newel post and square balusters rises to a landing, makes a ninety degree angle, and continues to the second floor. A lozenge motif occurs on the landing. Marbelized baseboards enrich all the downstairs rooms and below the stair. In the front rooms the marbelizing is gray, in the back rooms, black, and beneath the stair it is cream colored. A high chair rail encircles three of the downstairs rooms, the fourth having been replastered.

Simple post and lintel or crosssetted mantels of simplified Greek Revival design occur in all four rooms in the front portion of the house and all doors consist of four flat panels on the lower story and six on the upper. Window and door surrounds vary, some being molded with corner blocks, others being mitered or crosssetted.

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Another stair descends into an enclosed stair hall in the ell and is anchored with a square newel post. Behind the stair hall is the kitchen containing an exposed brick chimney, paneled wainscot, and built-in cupboards with molded surrounds and corner blocks. Two doors each consisting of six raised panels open from the stair hall to the kitchen and from the stair hall to the porch, located on the west of the stair hall. On the far northwest corner of the house is a small pantry.

There is an outbuilding of uncertain origin to the northeast of the house which contains two rooms separated by a large stone chimney. To the northwest of the house is an old family cemetery, some of the stones dating to the first half of the nineteenth century. Members of both the Robards and Royster families are buried there. Located behind the house and beyond the cemetery are pack houses which were once used in the farm's tobacco industry.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates N/A Builder/Architect Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Robards-Royster House, also known as La Grange, was built circa 1830 by William Robards, a Granville County planter and politician. Through the marriage of Robard's daughter Jane, the house passed into the Royster family and has been owned by a succession of locally prominent planters and physicians. The mid-nineteenth-century Greek Revival house is representative of the substantial vernacular architecture executed for successful eastern North Carolina planters and bears some characteristics of the houses of Warrenton builder Jacob Holt.

Criteria Assessment:

A. Associated with the development of the agricultural economy of the north central piedmont counties along the Virginia border.

B. Associated with William Robards, successful planter and Treasurer of North Carolina; associated with the Royster family, whose members have included locally prominent planters and physicians; possibly associated with builder Jacob Holt, whose work appears throughout eastern North Carolina.

C. Reflects the widespread use of the boxy form and simplified Grecian and Italianate patternbook detail so popular in the mid-nineteenth century. Here motifs adapted by Warrenton builder Jacob Holt from pattern books of Asher Benjamin and William Ranlett are further modified, probably by another builder. Notable examples of marbleizing enrich the interior.

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The Robards-Royster House, known locally as LaGrange, is located about six miles north of the Vance County seat of Henderson. Parts of the house were built ca. 1830 by Colonel William Robards, while his son-in-law Stephen Sampson Royster made significant additions around 1850. There is some local tradition that parts of the house date back to the late eighteenth century.

William Robards was born in Granville County in 1780 (Vance County was formed in 1881, largely from Granville County). He was the fifth child of James Robards and Mary Massie. He represented Granville County in the North Carolina General Assembly in 1806 and 1808. In 1825 he purchased LaGrange from the estate of the late Dr. John Hare. Robards served from 1827 to 1830 as the Treasurer of the State of North Carolina, replacing John S. Haywood in that position. He retired from public office in 1830 and built his plantation house about that time. He was a respected planter, who owned 21 slaves in 1830. Robards married Ann Satterwhite in 1802 and they had six children.¹

In 1840 Robards's daughter Jane married Stephen Sampson Royster, a native of Virginia, who was born in 1810. Family tradition maintains that Royster came to Williamsboro to take part in a wedding and fell in love with Miss Robards, who was his partner in the wedding procession. They were married in the latter part of the year. William Robards died in 1842. In 1849 Royster purchased LaGrange from the Robards estate for \$5,000. It is possible that he and his wife had lived there for some time prior to his formal acquisition of the property. Shortly after this acquisition Royster made significant additions to the house.²

Royster was a large and successful planter. He was one of the area's largest tobacco growers. Tobacco had not reached the level of importance in North Carolina agriculture that it would reach after the Civil War, but it was a crop of some stature and Granville County was an area where much of it was grown. The 1850 census shows that Royster was farming 600 acres, with 1,000 acres unimproved. His real estate was valued at \$13,000. He grew 30,000 pounds of tobacco, by far his largest crop. He also had a substantial amount of livestock, \$1,320 worth, including 125 swine. Royster grew 1,200 bushels of wheat, 3,000 bushels of corn, and 2 tons of hay. He owned 43 slaves.³ In 1860 he had 900 acres under cultivation, valued at \$19,500. The value of his livestock had increased to \$4,050. Royster's tobacco production increased to 35,000 pounds, while he also grew 1,400 bushels of wheat, 2,500 of corn, 1,500 of oats, and 10 tons of hay.⁴

Royster's plantation suffered a typical post Civil War decline. He had 800 acres under cultivation, with a value of \$11,000. His tobacco production declined dramatically, down to 5,000 pounds. He still had a large amount of livestock and grew 1,750 bushels of corn, 1,000 of wheat, and 1,000 of oats.⁵

Royster and his wife Jane had at least nine children. Royster died in 1878 and left LaGrange to his wife.⁶ The 1880 census shows that she continued to farm the property with help from her sons William, John, Richard, and Edward. The production of the farm was less than that of 1870, although the Royster's did grow over 2,000 pounds of cotton in 1880. Jane Royster died in the 1880s and divided the property among her children. Thomas Satterwhite Royster kept LaGrange.⁷ Thomas Satterwhite Royster was a talented and versatile man who taught school, put himself through medical school and became a physician of note. He willed the property to his wife Sallie Alston Royster.⁸ At her death the property

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was willed to her son Thomas Sampson Royster, a prominent Henderson surgeon who died in 1939.⁹ His son Thomas Royster, Jr., also a physician, is the present owner of the property. For much of this century LaGrange has been occupied by tenants. Richard Nethery, who died in 1954, occupied the house with his family. In recent years the family of Jackson Lee Wade has occupied the property. Mr. Wade died in 1967 and his widow and daughter are the current occupants of the house.¹⁰ In addition to the old plantation house, the property contains several outbuildings and a family cemetery.

LaGrange is still in good repair. Historically it is representative of both Granville County's antebellum plantation life and Vance County's post-Civil War farm economy.

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

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FOOTNOTES

¹John L. Cheney, Jr. (ed.), North Carolina Government, 1585-1974: A Narrative and Statistical History (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of the Secretary of State, 1975), 181, 252, 255; Fifth Census of the United States, 1830, Granville County, North Carolina; Unpublished genealogical material supplied by the owners, copy in file, hereinafter cited as Genealogical material.

²Genealogical Material; Granville County Wedding Bonds; Granville County Deed Book 15, p. 307; John Bullock Watkins, Jr., Historic Vance County (Henderson: N.p., 1941), 13.

³Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, Granville County, North Carolina, Agricultural Schedule, Population Schedule, Slave Schedule.

⁴Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Granville County, North Carolina, Agricultural Schedule, Population Schedule.

⁵Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, Granville County, North Carolina, Agricultural Schedule, Population Schedule.

⁶Genealogical Material.

⁷Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Granville County, North Carolina, Agricultural Schedule; Genealogical Material.

⁸Samuel Thomas Peace, Zeb's Black Baby: Vance County, North Carolina (Henderson: N.P., 1955), 107, hereinafter cited as Peace, Zeb's Black Baby; Vance County Will Book A, p. 314.

⁹News and Observer (Raleigh), August 2, 1939; Vance County Will Book P, p. 635; Peace, Zeb's Black Baby, 108, 365.

¹⁰Genealogical Information; News and Observer (Raleigh), November 4, 1954, November 24, 1967.

9. Major Bibliographica' Referen

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 131.68 acres

Quadrangle name Townsville

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A	1,7	7,3,1,6,2,0	3,0,4,2,1,0,0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	1,7	7,3,2,7,2,0	3,0,4,2,2,0,0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	1,7	7,3,2,7,6,0	3,0,4,2,1,2,0
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D	1,7	7,3,2,4,0,0	3,0,4,1,6,3,0
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E	1,7	7,3,2,1,4,0	3,0,4,1,5,2,0
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F	1,7	7,3,1,8,6,0	3,0,4,1,1,8,0
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G	1,7	7,3,1,6,4,0	3,0,4,1,7,9,0
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H			
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Verbal boundary description and justification

See plat map outlined in red. 1951 Soil Conservation Survey, 8-V

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

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
-------	-----	------	--------	-----	------

state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title JoAnn Williford, Survey Specialist
Jim Sumner, Researcher
organization Survey & Planning Branch
Archeology & Historic Preservation Section date September, 1981
Division Archives & Historic
street & number 109 East Jones Street telephone (919) 733-6545
city or town Raleigh state North Carolina 27611

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *William S. Fier, Jr.*

title State Historic Preservation Officer date March 10, 1982

For HCRS 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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Page 1

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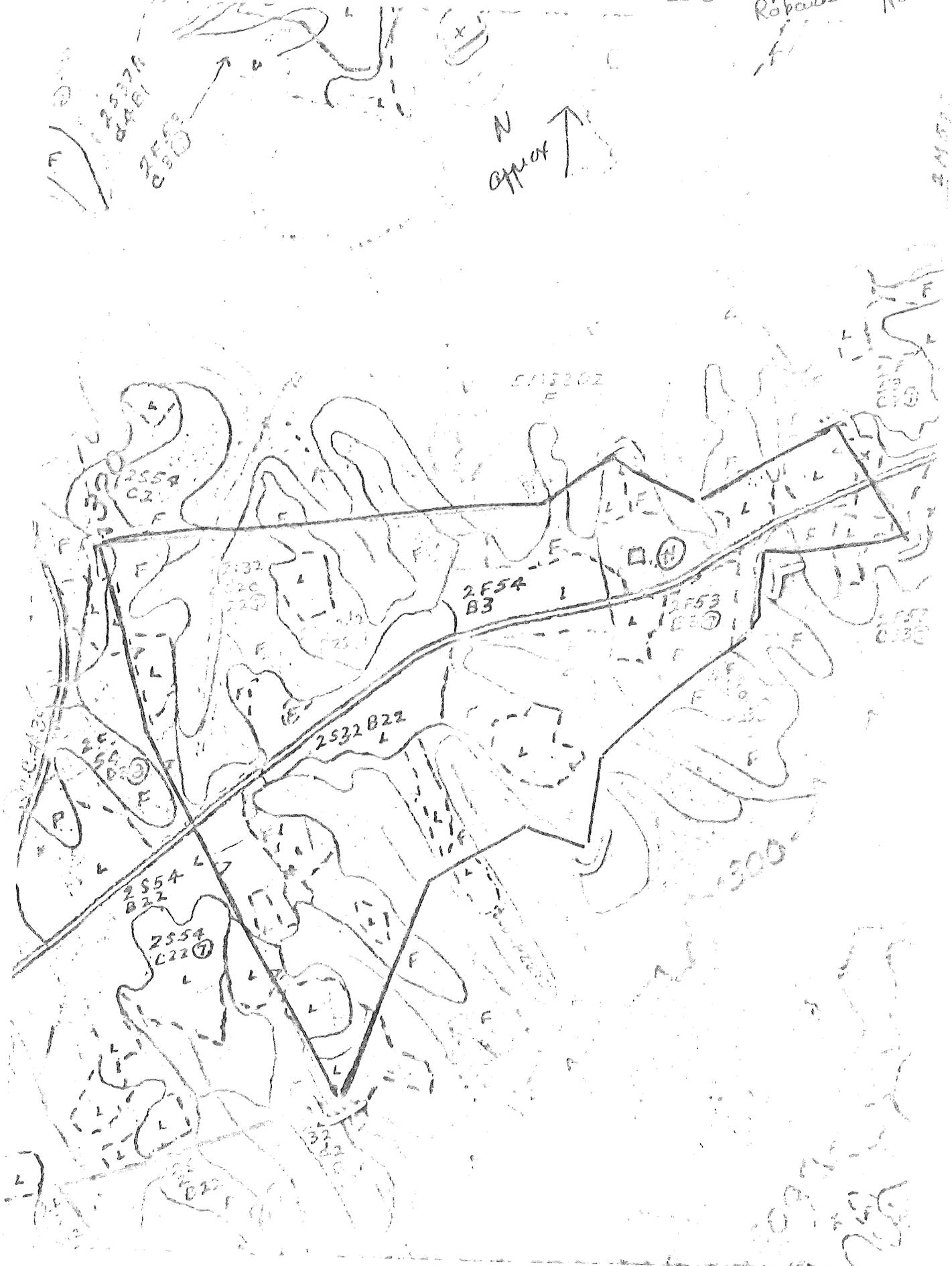
United States Census Office. Fifth Census of the United States, 1830, Granville County, North Carolina; Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, Granville County, North Carolina, Agricultural Schedule, Population Schedule, Slave Schedule; Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Granville County, North Carolina, Agricultural Schedule, Population Schedule; Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, Granville County, North Carolina, Agricultural Schedule, Population Schedule; Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Granville County, North Carolina, Agricultural Schedule. Microfilm copies. Raleigh: Division of Archives and History.

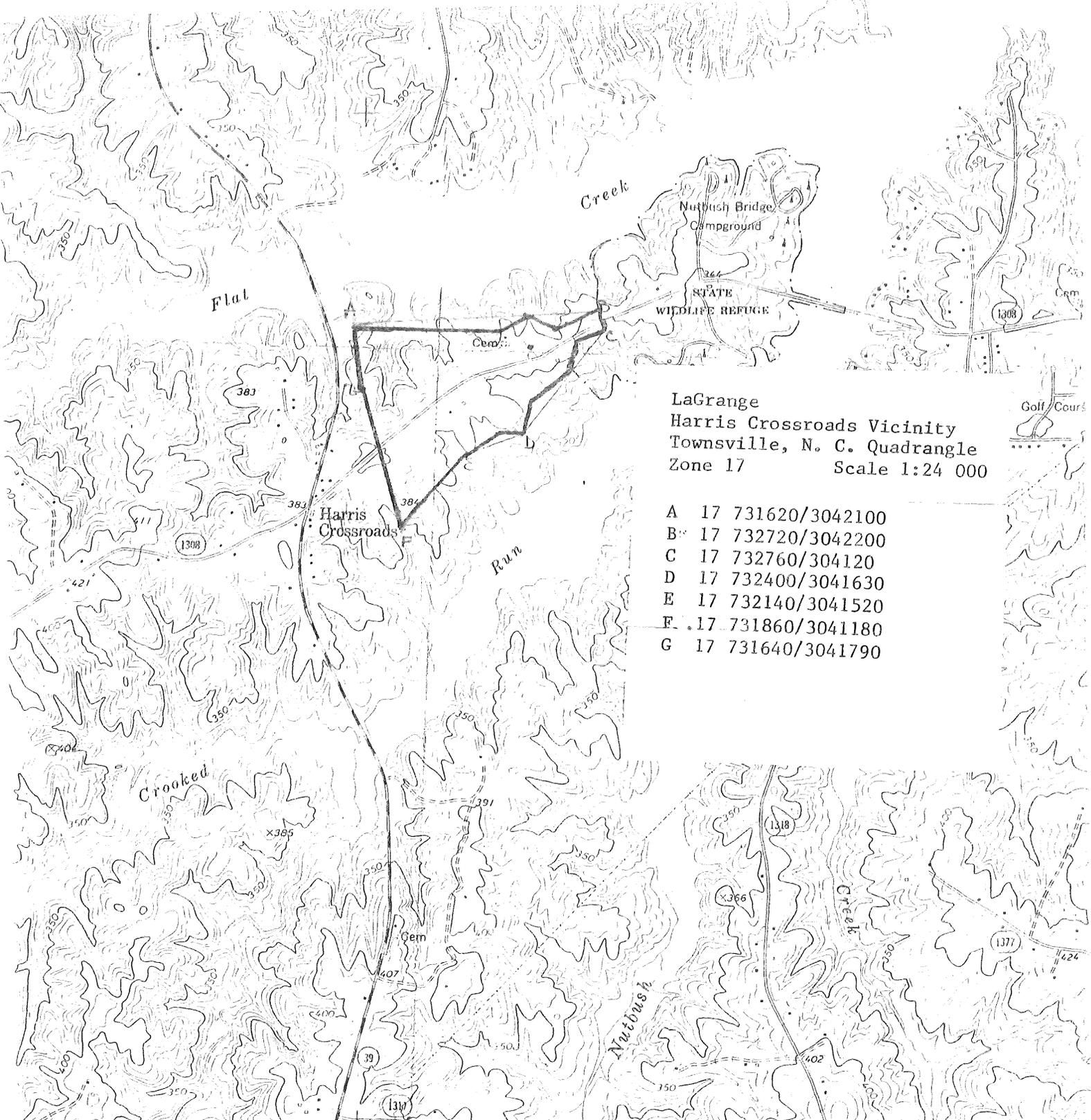
8-V

Site Plat Plat pau S&L Carrencia Survey 1951

"La Grange"

Robards Register

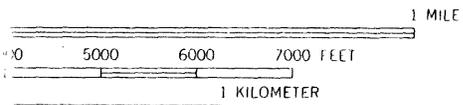




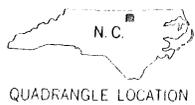
LaGrange
 Harris Crossroads Vicinity
 Townsville, N. C. Quadrangle
 Zone 17 Scale 1:24 000

- A 17 731620/3042100
- B 17 732720/3042200
- C 17 732760/304120
- D 17 732400/3041630
- E 17 732140/3041520
- F 17 731860/3041180
- G 17 731640/3041790

731 HENDERSON 3.5 MI 25' 732 733 734 INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C.—1973 735000m E.



100 FEET
 LEVEL



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- Primary highway, hard surface
- Secondary highway, hard surface
- Light-duty road, hard improved surface
- Unimproved road
- Interstate Route
- U. S. Route
- State

ACCURACY STANDARDS
 WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
 SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

TOWNSVILLE
 N3622.5—W7822

