

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Walnut Hill Cotton Gin

and or common

2. Location

street & number North side SR 2509, 0.2 miles West of  
junction with SR 2506 not for publication

city, town Knightdale vicinity of

state North Carolina code 037 county Wake code 183

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: none

4. Owner of Property

name B. Robert Williamson

street & number 526 Oakwood Avenue

city, town Raleigh vicinity of state N. C. 27601

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds, Wake County Courthouse

street & number 336 Fayetteville Street Mall

city, town Raleigh state N. C.

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? yes  no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

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## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input 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		

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

The Walnut Hill Plantation gin house is a rectangular, gable-roofed, two and a half-story frame and stone masonry building. It sits by itself just off State Road 2509 in rural eastern Wake County, perpendicular to the road, 75 feet from the pavement on a site that slopes gradually to the north. To the west and south of the gin house the surrounding area is clear, but to the east and north is recent growth longleaf pine woods. Small hardwoods and vines grow closely against the gin house on all sides.

Fifteen feet to the east of the gin house, and parallel to its south elevation, is an overhead, two-cylinder steam engine on a concrete base which appears to be early twentieth century in origin. The engine's drive shaft is on its west side, where it could have been used to power a belt drive connected to a shaft leading into the gin house. Just to the east of the engine is a circular, granite block-lined pit with a granite block retaining wall extending from it to the north, perhaps a former base for the boiler.

Twelve feet from the steam engine to the northeast is an approximately nine foot by twelve foot board and batten, gable-roofed shed in poor condition. This early twentieth century structure, which appears to be a storage shed for oil and/or fuel for the engine, has an interesting roof whose shingles are 1933 North Carolina license plates, all with the same number.

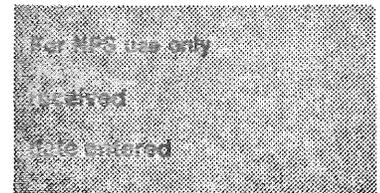
The gin house itself is approximately 36 feet wide by 56 feet long. Tall, ashlar granite piers define a square space at the first floor south end of the gin. The granite piers are two foot thick, with raised ribbon joints painted white with lime in a style typical of antebellum Wake County stonework. Each of the corner piers is L-shaped, with a pair of rectangular piers between each corner. Short granite rubble piers of much less careful construction support the building's rear section.

Above the first floor, the south elevation is one and a half stories of clapboard-faced wall under deep eaves. The eaves are trimmed with a scalloped bargeboard, and boxed from their outer corner to the projecting top beam of the side wall. The second floor has an off-center entrance with a board and batten door, flanked by single windows, now filled in with clapboard. Just below this door are mortises cut into the exposed lower beam of the wall, suggesting that there was a platform at this point, with stairs leading to the ground. The top floor of the gin house has a central opening with double board and batten doors flanked by openings that originally contained double-hung sash. Over this central door is a projecting beam with a ring in it for a rope hoist.

The south end of the west elevation of the building is a single story of clapboarded wall over the granite piers. Ceiling joists from the second floor project out from the side of the building and are exposed, supporting the roof rafter ends. A scalloped barge board covers the tips

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of the rafters. Directly over the third pier from the front is a door opening framed with a protruding board enclosure. Above the door is a diagonally-inclined wooden chute. Adjacent to the door is an older board and batten door. One window next to the door survives intact with a board and batten exterior shutter, while there are ghost marks of one and possibly two windows that have been clapboarded over. During the late nineteenth century, a two-story shed (no longer existing) was attached to the building at this location, with an open lower story through which wagons could drive to be unloaded. Wooden beams and a pit survive to indicate that a wagon scale was located in the unloading shed.<sup>1</sup> At the rear of the west elevation there is a door opening, over which is a six over six sash window.

The north or rear elevation is similar to its opposite number, having a central double door on the third floor flanked by windows. On the east side of the second floor are the remains of a window opening, and what may have been a door, although the latter was at some point enlarged, possibly as a means of removing cotton bales from the press. An original door frame is centered under this opening on the first floor, but the door is now missing.

The east elevation is the simplest of the building. On the south end of the first floor the spaces between the piers are filled in with stud walls and clapboard, except for a door or drive belt opening between the central two piers. A single window, covered by a board and batten shutter, is centered on the second floor between the rear two piers. During the 1920s or early 1930s, a section of the eaves was cut out and a shed dormer was added to accommodate exhaust stacks for a vacuum lint-moving system. This area of the roof is now deteriorated and leaks onto the third floor.

Inside, the gin house is divided spatially and structurally according to function. The front, lower portion is a 36 foot square that must have contained the power shaft and mule track. Typically, two to four mules would have been hitched to horizontal sweeps that turned a central, vertical shaft. On the shaft above the sweeps would have been a large, wooden cog wheel, eight to ten feet in diameter. The cogs of this wheel meshed with wallowers set in the circumference of a horizontal shaft, which turned in wood hangers that were suspended from the floor above. On the horizontal shaft would be a plain wooden pulley six or eight feet in diameter around which would pass the leather belt which drove the gin or gins.<sup>2</sup> The U-shaped wooden supports for the horizontal shaft are still in place, but they contain an iron shaft with belt wheels, possibly installed in 1857.<sup>3</sup>

Whatever the transfer system, the reality of mule power was that four mules could at best provide power for two 50 saw gins.<sup>4</sup> Mial purchased a 15 horsepower steam engine in 1875, and if this engine was used for the gin, it would have made possible a considerable increase in capacity.

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Mule power must have been abandoned by the late nineteenth century, as the spaces between the piers were filled in with panels then, and a partition of studs and weatherboards was used to divide off a room in the southeast corner. Rectangular holes in the wall indicate that drive belts carried power into the room, which still contains a small feed or corn mill. A plank floor was also installed throughout the space.

The front portion of the gin house, that over the drive room, is more heavily structured than the rear section of the building. Four very large, hewn rectangular beams span the drive room from east to west. These beams support three rows of large, rectangular timber posts that run from north to south. The central two posts act as king members for trusses, the diagonal members rising from the side piers to the third floor ceiling. On the second floor hewn girts run from post to post down the center of the building and are mortised into the central posts. The floors of the second and third levels are composed of full-span large hewn joists running perpendicular to the main beams, covered with tongue and groove flooring. Standard heavy timber construction, with hand-hewn corner posts and beams, with pit-sawn studs mortised in, is used for the remainder of the building's structure.

Behind the drive room on the first floor, and connected to it only by holes for drive belts, the rear, all frame section is divided into two rooms by a central partition with a connecting door. The partition has been moved about a foot (on both the first and second floors), probably to accommodate a larger press. Painted on the door is "Bagging Room and Press Room, 1880", along with numerous initials, names and dates from 1880 to the 1930s in the black paint used to stencil initials on pressed cotton bales.

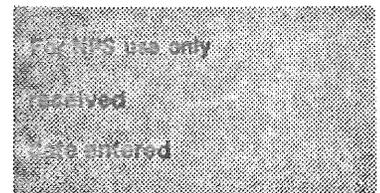
On the second floor the interior is divided into a large, open front room and two smaller rooms at the rear separated by a partition. At the front, or south end of the building are the remains of four seed cotton storage bins, two on each side.

The room on the northeast corner of the building is open to the large room at the front. Although it may originally have been partitioned off, some elements of structure have been removed and a number of ceiling and floor joists cut to accommodate a large, double-box cotton press and its round platform. Rising from the first to the third floor, the press occupies most of that portion of the building.

A board and batten wall connects the northeast room to the northwest one. The latter is partially open to the large front space. Against the partial wall which closes off the room is an open stair that leads to the third floor.

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The third floor is essentially open and was probably used for the storage of baled cotton awaiting shipment. Board partition walls enclose the stair as it rises into the third floor, and the northeast corner of the room is occupied by the squirrel cage and exhaust stacks of the vacuum lint moving system. The rafters, which are exposed, are tied together above head level with collar beams.

In the middle of the second floor is where the gins were originally, and still are located. Although there are references in the Mial accounts and correspondence to a gin from 1846 on, the first clearly-documented reference is to Mial's purchase of a 50 saw gin from E. T. Taylor and Company in November of 1853.<sup>5</sup> A "Pratt's 50 saw gin" was ordered for delivery on January 1, 1861.<sup>6</sup> One of these gins, somewhat altered, may still be in the gin house.

W. M. Sorrell of Cary repaired two gins for Mial in September of 1874, and in December of 1875 Sorrell billed Mial for "1 new gin and repairs for old", the new gin presumably being one of the Cary Cotton Gins touted on Sorrell's letterhead. Mial purchased a 40 saw Pratt gin and condensor from Williamson and Upchurch of Raleigh in October of 1880 and a 40 saw Pratt feeder in September of 1881.<sup>8</sup> Another gin and flat feeder was purchased from Daniel Pratt Gin Company in August of 1899.<sup>9</sup>

Five nineteenth century gins survive in the gin house. There are three saw gins without manufacturer's labels which are marked with 1873 patent dates, an unmarked, possibly antebellum gin, and a marked Daniel Pratt gin, probably the one purchased in 1899.

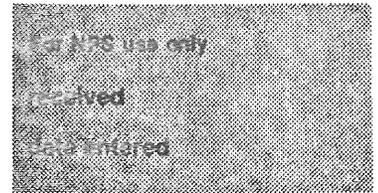
Cotton was initially fed by hand directly into the top of the gin, requiring constant attention. From 1860 to 1900, individual feeders became available, primarily the apron type horizontal distributor feeder, in which a spiked, slatted conveyor belt fed the seed cotton in measured amounts from a storage box to the gin.<sup>10</sup> There are five nineteenth century feeders surviving in the gin house, four of the horizontal type designed to sit on top of the gin and one front feeder with legs.

At least one condensor remains in the gin house, most likely the one purchased in 1880. With condensor, lint from the gin was blown up a passageway to a cylindrical drum, off of which it could be unwound in batts instead of the usual loose lint.

While the invention of feeders simplified tending the gins, the ginning operation remained labor intensive. Seed cotton had to be brought up from the first level in baskets and, after ginning, carried to the press. In 1884 Munger invented a new system employing a suction pipe which could lift seed cotton from a wagon to a screened box called a separator. From

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the separator seed cotton was conveyed by a spiked belt to the feeder hoppers over the gins.<sup>11</sup> In the late nineteenth century, a Munger system was installed at Walnut Hill. Wagons loaded with seed cotton would drive into the shed on the west side of the building, where a hose hanging down from the third floor would suction the cotton into rectangular wooden ducts that led to the separator at the ceiling of the second floor. These rectangular ducts survive, as do the vacuum box, separator, and conveyor belts that went with the Munger system. There is also a screw conveyor inside a rectangular wooden box running from the gins to the west elevation and which would have been used to transfer cotton seed.

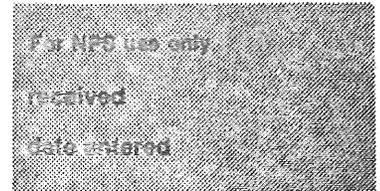
During the late 1920s or 1930s, the nineteenth century gin stands were replaced with two vertical saw gin stands with feeders. These gins, manufactured by the Murray Company of Dallas and Atlanta, have 1922 patent dates on them. The basic Munger system was kept, but it was supplemented by sheetmetal ductwork leading from the gins to the third floor over the press. The ducts carried ginned lint directly to the press, eliminating hand transfers.

Ginned cotton lint had to be packaged for travel to market. By the 1840s most cotton was compressed into a bale by the use of a large, mule-powered wooden screw press, located outdoors next to the gin house. There is no longer any evidence of this press at Walnut Hill, but a note from the operator of the gin in 1867<sup>12</sup> requests A. T. Mial to "...send some tallow to grease the gin screw...".<sup>12</sup> Walnut Hill's gin kept its outdoor screw, at least until after the installation of steam power, but a pile of press sections in the bagging room of the gin may be a single box press purchased by Mial late in the century.

A double-box, turntable cotton press was patented by the Winship Company in 1893.<sup>13</sup> The surviving cotton press in the gin house is of this type, dating from the early twentieth century. With the revolving press, cotton lint could be fed into one box, where it would be tamped down by means of a chain-driven overhead ram. The boxes would then be revolved, and the full box would be compressed by a screw-driven, belt powered ram from below. This system allowed for nearly continuous processing of bales.

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1 Alonzo T. and Millard Mial Papers, North Carolina State Archives, Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Raleigh, North Carolina (hereinafter cited as Mial Papers), Correspondence, 1884-1895.

2 D. A. Tompkins, Cotton and Cotton Oil (Charlotte: D. A. Tompkins, 1901), p. 35.

3 Mial Papers, Accounts 1857.

4 Charles A. Bennett, Cotton Ginning Systems in the United States and Auxiliary Developments (Dallas: The Cotton Ginners' Journal, 1962), p. 6.

5 Mial Papers, Correspondence 1853-1855.

6 Mial Papers, Accounts 1849-1860.

7 Mial Papers, Accounts 1874, 1875-1876.

8 Mial Papers, Accounts 1877-1885.

9 Mial Papers, Accounts 1894-1926.

10 Bennett, Cotton Ginning Systems, p. 31.

11 Charles A. Bennett, Saw and Toothed Cotton Ginning Developments (Dallas: The Cotton Ginners' Journal, 1959), p. 10.

12 Mial Papers, Correspondence 1867-1868.

13 Bennett, Cotton Ginning Systems, p. 7.

## 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates c. 1845-c. 1935 Builder/Architect Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Walnut Hill Plantation cotton gin house in eastern Wake County possesses statewide significance as one of a handful of intact ante-bellum gin houses surviving in the state of North Carolina. Apparently built in the mid to late 1840s by Alonzo T. Mial (1823-1897), a prosperous Wake County planter and commission merchant, it was operated by Mial, by his son Millard (1852-1933), and by other family members, from the late 1840s until the mid 1930s. Owned today by a direct descendant of Alonzo Mial, it is one of a very few gin houses in the state which retain a significant collection of early ginning equipment, in this case representing the entire period of its operation. This superb example of a 19th century gin house, with its complement of ginning equipment, associated storage shed, exterior engine, and possible archeological remains, is a significant remnant of a substantial plantation, providing important information about the state's early cotton culture and about the evolution of cotton ginning operations and equipment.

### Criteria Assessment:

- A. The Walnut Hill cotton gin house is associated with cotton plantation life in North Carolina from the late 1840s through the mid 1930s and with the evolution of cotton ginning operations and equipment during that period.
- B. Is associated with the lives of Alonzo T. Mial, prominent planter and commission merchant, and his son, Millard, who was also active in the political life of Wake County in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
- C. Is an outstanding example of a privately-operated, plantation-centered cotton gin of the 19th century, with an exceptional collection of ginning equipment.
- D. Is likely to yield information important in our history. The potential for archaeological resources within the proposed boundaries is extremely high. Although the property has not been tested, evidence for the cotton press, ancillary buildings, and the wagon scales is probably present in the archaeological record. In fact, the pit for the wagon scales is visible as a surface feature. Additional information concerning operation and construction of the scales is undoubtedly present below grade. As these features represent the remains of structures which were directly related to the operation of the gin, and they are within the proposed boundaries, they contribute to the significance of the property and should be included in the nomination.

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The Walnut Hill Plantation cotton gin house in eastern Wake County possesses statewide significance as one of a handful of intact antebellum gin houses surviving in the state of North Carolina. In addition, it is one of a very few gin houses--if not the only--which retain a significant amount of early ginning equipment; in this case, the remaining equipment represents the entire period in which the gin operated, from the late 1840s to the mid 1930s.<sup>1</sup> A final notable feature of the gin house is its continuous ownership by members of the same family from the late 18th or early 19th century to the present and its association with prominent members of that family.

The gin house appears to have been built in the mid 1840s by Alonzo T. Mial, a prosperous Wake County planter and commission merchant. He inherited the land on which he built it from his father, Thomas Mial, Jr., whose father, Thomas Mial, Sr., apparently acquired it prior to his death in about 1810.<sup>2</sup> After Alonzo Mial's death, the gin house tract passed to his oldest son Millard Mial, and is owned today by B. Robert Williamson, a great-nephew of Millard Mial and great-grandson of Alonzo Mial. Although operation of the cotton gin ceased within a few years after the death of Millard Mial in 1933, and the main house at Alonzo Mial's Walnut Hill Plantation was destroyed by fire in 1973, the gin house remains as a symbol of plantation life and the cotton culture in Wake County and North Carolina throughout the second half of the 19th century and for the first four decades of the 20th.

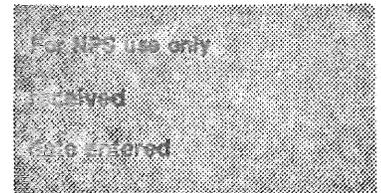
The first cotton gin for upland cotton was invented by Eli Whitney in 1793; refinements were made by Whitney in 1795 and Holmes in 1796.<sup>3</sup> A radical change in Southern economic and social life came about as a result of the cotton gin. With seed removal made much simpler, upland cotton, the only type which would grow in most of the South, became one of the region's most important crops. Production of cotton grew dramatically in the first half of the 19th century, and on the eve of the Civil War cotton accounted for more than half of the nation's total exports.<sup>4</sup> Largely because of cotton, Negro slavery went from a dying institution to a cornerstone of the Southern economy.

Because of a plantation system that emphasized extensive rather than intensive cultivation, the constant demand for new land shifted the center of the cotton kingdom ever westward. The Old South's share of the total crop was correspondingly small. North Carolina's cotton crop in 1859-1860 was 145,514 bales out of a total crop of 3,774,000 bales.<sup>5</sup>

After the Civil War, the cotton production system underwent a substantial change. Since new lands were not readily available, and the relatively cheap pre-War supply of labor was gone, intensive production, using large amounts of fertilizer, became a necessity. Cotton cultivation in North Carolina spread from 893,000 acres in 1879 to 1,307,000 acres in 1904, an increase of 46%, while production went from 389,000 bales to 750,000 bales, an increase of 92%. No other state was a better example of the

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possibilities of intensive cultivation.<sup>6</sup>

In 1839, 68 North Carolina counties were reported as producing cotton, but the largest producers were Anson, Northampton, Cabarrus, Halifax and Edgecombe counties, principally areas with large slave populations.<sup>7</sup> In 1879 Wake County had the largest crop, 30,115 bales.<sup>8</sup> By 1899, the three counties reporting the greatest area in cotton production were Mecklenburg, Robeson and Wake counties, areas with access to railroad transport for fertilizer and marketing.<sup>9</sup>

Alonzo T. Mial (1823-1897), the apparent builder of the Walnut Hill gin house, was a major landowner and prominent planter in eastern Wake County from the middle years of the 19th century until his death a few years before the turn of the 20th. He was the only son of Thomas Mial, Jr., (d. 1830) and Scheherazade (Price) Mial (d. 1853), a daughter of Thomas and Rebecca (Robertson) Price of nearby "Oak Grove" plantation.<sup>10</sup> In his will, Thomas Mial, Jr., bequeathed to his son the "Walnut Hill" plantation, possession to be assumed when Alonzo reached the age of twenty-one and Scheherazade retaining dower rights in the estate.<sup>11</sup>

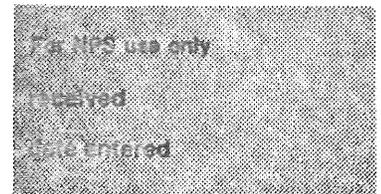
At the death of Thomas Mial, Jr., the Walnut Hill estate consisted of 1,311 acres; he also left his heirs 40,000 pounds of seed cotton, indicating that cotton was already a major crop at the plantation.<sup>12</sup> As Alonzo Mial was only seven years old at the time, management of the plantation was left in the hands of an overseer appointed by his father's executor.<sup>13</sup> Alonzo received his formal education at Hillsborough Academy, which he attended from 1836 to 1839.<sup>14</sup> From 1839 to early 1844, he lived in Oxford, Mississippi, with his uncle, Washington Price, who owned a plantation there.<sup>15</sup> It is possible that Mial acquired much of his knowledge about cotton cultivation during his four to five year sojourn in Mississippi. Returning to North Carolina in 1844, shortly before his twenty-first birthday, he took over the operation of the plantation.<sup>16</sup>

Records show that during the latter part of the 1840s and through the 1850s, Mial worked to build up his plantation, so that by 1860 he owned, in Wake County, a total of 2,420 acres, of which 800 were improved, for a valuation of \$10,900. In addition to the normal products of a self-sustaining plantation, Mial had a substantial livestock operation. But his most important cash crop was cotton--in that year, the plantation produced approximately 60,000 pounds (150 bales, at about 400 pounds per bale). As is to be expected in view of this sizeable farming operation, Mial owned some 33 slaves, of whom 28 were twelve years of age or older. These slaves probably constituted a major portion of the \$30,000 value at which his personal estate was estimated in the 1860 census.<sup>17</sup>

Since cotton is a bulky crop, it could not be transported long distances for processing over antebellum North Carolina's primitive roads. A plan-

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tation of any size would have one or more gins. The estate inventory of Thomas Price, Alonzo Mial's grandfather, lists several gins.<sup>18</sup> The earliest gins were hand-powered, but gradually a mule drive method was devised, together with a gin house structure that was virtually standard until 1875 or 1880.<sup>19</sup> The gin house was designed to meet requirements including:

1. Storage for seed cotton as it was picked.
2. A place for the operation of the gin.
3. A lint room to receive the cotton as it was ginned.
4. A room for temporary storage of the cotton while it was waiting to be packed.
5. Space for the driving apparatus where mule power could be applied under shelter.<sup>20</sup>

The most common arrangement was a one and a half or two story building in which the greater part of the lower story was left open on the sides, except where it adjoined the lint room. It was in this area that two to four mules were hitched to horizontal sweeps that turned a central, vertical shaft. The gin was located in a room above the drive room, and the rooms to the rear were used for storing the ginned cotton lint until it was pressed and packaged.<sup>21</sup> The gin house at Walnut Hill was built in this configuration with ten-foot, dressed stone piers supporting the upper floors; changes in siding between the various parts of the structure indicate that the first-floor area at the front of the building was originally open.

It seems likely that Alonzo Mial built the large gin house in the mid to late 1840s, not long after his return from Mississippi. References to a cotton gin occur in the Alonzo T. and Millard Mial Papers as early as March 1846, and a November 1847 receipt for payment for whetting the gin, repairing the running gear and moving the lint room suggests that cotton was being ginned in a structure on the plantation. By late 1848, there are receipts pertaining to ginning of one Joseph F. Cook's 1848 cotton crop.<sup>22</sup>

As the Cook receipt indicates, the gin operation was not restricted to the Walnut Hill cotton crop. Account books, receipts, and other notations reveal that cotton was ginned, stored and shipped for many farmers and planters in the surrounding area of Wake and Johnston counties.<sup>23</sup>

In his day laborer Time Book for 1860, Mial listed as many as five wage-earning workers as performing "work on Gin House & Screw," on a given day.<sup>24</sup> Since ten to fifteen men were generally required to run a ginning operation, the remainder of the gin house workers probably came from among Mial's slaves.<sup>25</sup> Immediately following the Civil War, Mial, like most planters, entered into yearly contracts with his former slaves to ensure that he had enough labor to plant and harvest crops and to carry out the various functions associated with a large plantation.<sup>26</sup>

Throughout his active years as a planter, Mial endeavored to increase

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the productivity and profitability of his plantation by using increasingly sophisticated fertilizers, scientific farming methods, and improved machinery and seeking the best markets for his farm yields. Probably as a consequence of his interest in improved farming methods, he served as a delegate to the National Convention of State Agricultural Societies in 1856 and later became active in the North Carolina Grange.<sup>27</sup>

On 1 May 1850, Mial married Victoria LeMay (1832-ca. 1901), daughter of Eliza (Sledge) and Thomas J. Lemay; the latter was editor of the North Carolina Star, a Raleigh newspaper.<sup>28</sup> During the next fifteen years, they had six children--Millard (1852-1933), Ella (1854-1941), Eliza (b. 1857), Alonzo Thomas, Jr. (b. 1859), Leonidas (b. 1863), and Wilbur Sidonias (b. 1865).<sup>29</sup> In order to provide his children with a good education, Mial established a classical school on his plantation and sought good teachers to tutor his children and those of his neighbors.<sup>30</sup>

The Civil War seems to have had little immediate or long-term major, disastrous effect on the Mials. Mial himself was exempted from service in the Confederate Army, and most of his slaves remained on the plantation, so that he was able to continue cotton cultivation and ginning. Some cotton he was able to sell to private buyers, but, as the War continued, he was forced to sell more and more to the state government.<sup>31</sup>

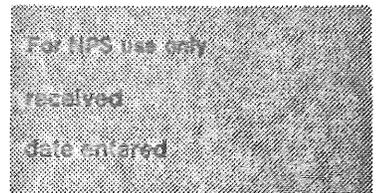
Prior to the Civil War, Mial sold the bulk of his cotton through brokers in Petersburg, Virginia. After the War ended, Mial quickly resumed marketing cotton outside the state--as early as September 1865, he shipped fifty bales to Bennett, Van Pelt and Company in New York, which was his principal market for several years. By 1867, he had begun shipping much of the nearly 130 bales of cotton produced on his Wake and Johnston county lands directly from Norfolk to Liverpool, England, where it presumably was destined for English cotton mills. And he continued to gin the cotton of others, also in increasing quantities--22 bales for 10 persons in 1867 and 56 bales for 20 persons in 1869.<sup>32</sup>

During the twenty-five years prior to his death, Mial made efforts to improve his ginning equipment, repairing old gins and buying new ones. In the mid 1870s, he acquired Taylor and Daniel Pratt gins and a fifteen-horsepower Blandy patent portable steam engine. The 1880s saw the procurement of another engine, another Pratt gin, condenser and feeder, new wagon scales, and a boiler. And in 1893, he bought a new cotton press wheel.<sup>33</sup>

Mial died in December 1897; in his will, he left ". . . all of my Real Estate and personal property lying and situate in the counties of Wake, Johnston and Beaufort," as well as some Texas acreage, to his wife Victoria, to be divided among their children after her death.<sup>34</sup> Victoria Mial survived her husband by only a few years. Although she is listed in the population schedule of the 1900 census, by the following year, the estate was being divided among the children, indicating a late 1900 or early 1901 death date.<sup>35</sup>

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Millard Mial had acquired the interest of his youngest brother W. S. Mial (who had moved to Texas some years previously) in the estate, giving him a two-sixths share.<sup>36</sup> In the land partition, he received tract number 3, known as the Home Tract (488 acres), and tract number 4, known as the Gin House Tract (509 acres).<sup>37</sup> The latter tract is the site of the Walnut Hill gin house.

After the deaths of his parents, Millard Mial remained on the plantation, operating the farm and the cotton gin. He also updated the gin equipment, purchasing a new gin from Daniel Pratt in 1899 and undertaking major modernizations in the 1920s.<sup>38</sup> After the turn of the 20th century, cotton ginning operations began moving away from the individual plantation setting to larger, commercial gins at more central locations where other services were available to farmers from rural areas.<sup>39</sup> But record books maintained by Millard Mial and managers hired by him indicate that the gin continued to operate until at least 1927.<sup>40</sup> Stenciled graffiti in the gin house suggest that it continued for a few years after Mial's death in 1933, although it probably has not been in use for nearly 50 years.

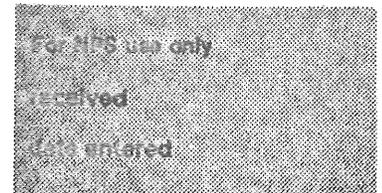
Millard Mial did not restrict his efforts to farming and ginning. In 1891, he was appointed Register of Deeds for Wake County and 1898 began a term on the Board of County Commissioners, of which he was later chairman. Continuing his political career, he served in the state House of Representatives in 1907, was a member of the Board of Education, and was elected several times as Clerk of Wake County Superior Court. He died in 1933.<sup>41</sup>

Millard Mial willed the upper half of the gin house tract (including the gin house) to his sister Ella, who in 1879 had married Bailey P. Williamson, Walnut Hill neighbor and commission merchant with whom her father had dealings.<sup>42</sup> At her death in 1941, the property passed to their four children--Herbert, Rosalind, Carl, and Gladys. Carl L. Williamson acquired the interests of his brother and sisters in 1943 and deeded all of his Mial land to his five children in 1961. These five children--Bailey P., B. Robert, Carl, Jr., M. Mial, and John L. Williamson--are the principals in Williamson Farms, Inc.<sup>43</sup>

In 1974, in a series of transactions, B. Robert Williamson acquired sole ownership of the approximately 260-acre tract on which the gin house stands.<sup>44</sup> Since the gin is no longer in operation and the majority of buildings associated with it as part of Walnut Hill plantation no longer exist, only the gin house and adjacent engine and oil shed, together with a tract of less than one acre, are being nominated. These buildings, the equipment in the gin house, and the possible archaeological remains comprise the principal components of the ginning operation and serve as a relatively complete representation of a major private cotton gin operation which functioned from the middle of the 19th century through most of the fourth decade of the 20th.

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<sup>1</sup> Survey and National Register of Historic Places files, Survey and Planning Branch, Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Raleigh, North Carolina.

<sup>2</sup> Alonzo T. and Millard Mial Papers, N. C. State Archives, Division of Archives and History, N. C. Department of Cultural Resources, Raleigh, N. C. (hereinafter cited as Mial Papers), Addition: Photocopies; and Wake County Register of Deeds (hereinafter cited as WCRD), deed book V, pp. 224, 231, and 334.

<sup>3</sup> Charles A. Bennett, Saw and Toothed Cotton Ginning Developments (Dallas: The Cotton Ginners' Journal, 1959), p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> James L. Watkins, King Cotton - A Historical Review 1790 to 1908 (New York: James L. Watkins & Sons, 1908), p. 12; and David L. Cohn, The Life and Times of King Cotton (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 88.

<sup>5</sup> Watkins, King Cotton, p. 60.

<sup>6</sup> Watkins, King Cotton, p. 55.

<sup>7</sup> Watkins, King Cotton, pp. 58-59.

<sup>8</sup> Watkins, King Cotton, p. 63.

<sup>9</sup> Watkins, King cotton, p. 66.

<sup>10</sup> Mial Papers, Introduction and Correspondence, 1853-1855.

<sup>11</sup> Wake County Clerk of Superior Court, Will Book 21, p. 383.

<sup>12</sup> Mial Papers, Introduction.

<sup>13</sup> Wake County Clerk, Will Book 21, p. 383.

<sup>14</sup> Mial Papers, Introduction.

<sup>15</sup> Mial Papers, Correspondence, 1838-1847.

<sup>16</sup> Mial Papers, Introduction and Correspondence, 1838-1847.

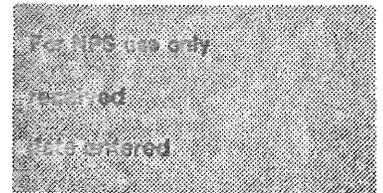
<sup>17</sup> United States Census, 1860, slave and agricultural schedule.

<sup>18</sup> Wake County Clerk, Estates and Settlements, 1831, pp. 89 and 108 ff.

<sup>19</sup> D. A. Tompkins, Cotton and Cotton Oil (Charlotte: D. A. Tomp-

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kins, 1901), p. 32.

20 Tompkins, Cotton and Cotton Oil, p. 33.

21 Tompkins, Cotton and Cotton Oil, p. 35.

22 Mial Papers, Notebooks and Pocket Account Books, 1826-1883.

23 Mial Papers, Notebooks and Pocket Account Books, 1826-1883 and Receipts, Accounts, etc., various years.

24 Mial Papers, Time Books (day laborers), 1860-1878.

25 Tompkins, Cotton and Cotton Oil, p. 44.

26 Mial Papers, Miscellaneous, 1866-1876.

27 Mial Papers, Introduction and general survey of Correspondence and Accounts, Receipts, etc.

28 N. C. State Archives, Marriage Bonds; and Mial Papers, Introduction

29 U. S. Census, 1860 and 1880, population schedules.

30 Mial Papers, Correspondence, 1867-1868.

31 Mial Papers, Miscellaneous, 1791-1865; and Mial Papers, Accounts, Receipts, etc., 1863-1866.

32 Mial Papers, Correspondence, 1848-1894, and Accounts, Receipts, etc., 1848-1894.

33 Mial Papers, Correspondence, 1873-1894, and Accounts, Receipts, etc., 1870-1893.

34 Wake County Clerk, Will Book D, p. 136.

35 U. S. Census, 1900, population schedule; and WCRD, deed book 173, p. 25.

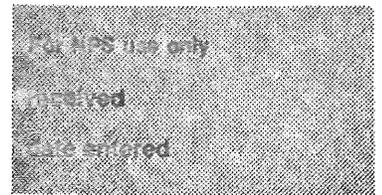
36 Wake County Clerk, Estates and Settlements, Book C, p. 133; and Mial Papers, Correspondence, 1884-1894.

37 WCRD, deed book 173, p. 25.

38 U. S. Census, 1910, population schedule; and Mial Papers, Accounts, Receipts, etc., 1894-1926.

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- 39 Survey Files, various counties.
- 40 Mial Papers, Cotton Ginner's Record Books, 1913-1927.
- 41 Mial Papers, Introduction; M. N. Amis, Historical Raleigh, with Sketches of Wake County and Its Important Towns (Raleigh: Commercial Printing Co., 1913), p. 208; and "Millard Mial Is Taken By Death," The (Raleigh, N. C.) News and Observer, 4 October 1933, p. 5.
- 42 Wake County Clerk, Will Book M, p. 50; WCRD, Marriage Register; and Mial Papers, Accounts, Receipts, etc., 1873-1893.
- 43 Wake County Clerk, Will Book O, p, 190; and WCRD, deed book 894, p. 346 and deed book 940, p. 566.
- 44 WCRD, deed book 2464, pp. 72 and 86.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheets.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .5

Quadrangle name Clayton

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 

1	7	7	30	1	90	39	5	7	11	0
Zone		Easting				Northing				

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing				

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing				

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing				

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing				

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing				

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing				

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing				

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheets

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

state N/A code county N/A code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title David R. Black, Architectural Conservator  
Allison H. Black, Architectural Historian

organization Black & Black  
Preservation Consultants date March 17, 1986

street & number 620 Wills Forest Street telephone 919 828-4616

city or town Raleigh state North Carolina 27605

# 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. Frie

title State Historic Preservation Officer date July 10, 1986

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

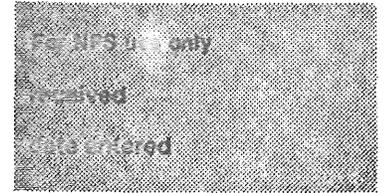
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Continuation sheet Major Bibliographical Reference number 9

Page 1

Amis, M. N. Historical Raleigh, with Sketches of Wake County and Its Important Towns. Raleigh: Commercial Printing Co., 1913.

Bennett, Charles A. Saw and Toothed Cotton Ginning Developments. Dallas: The Cotton Ginners' Journal, 1959.

Cohn, David L. The Life and Times of King Cotton. New York: Oxford University Press, 1956.

Mial, Alonzo T. and Millard, Papers. North Carolina State Archives. Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources. Raleigh, North Carolina.

Survey and Planning Branch. Survey and National Register of Historic Places files. Division of Archives and History, N. C. Department of Cultural Resources. Raleigh, N. C.

Tompkins, D. A. Cotton and Cotton Oil. Charlotte: D. A. Tompkins, 1901.

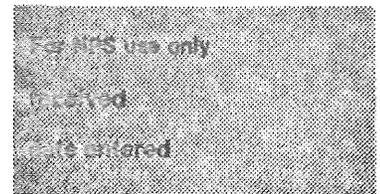
United States Census.

Wake County, North Carolina, records.

Watkins, James L. King Cotton - A Historical Review 1790 to 1908. New York: James L. Watkins & Sons, 1908.

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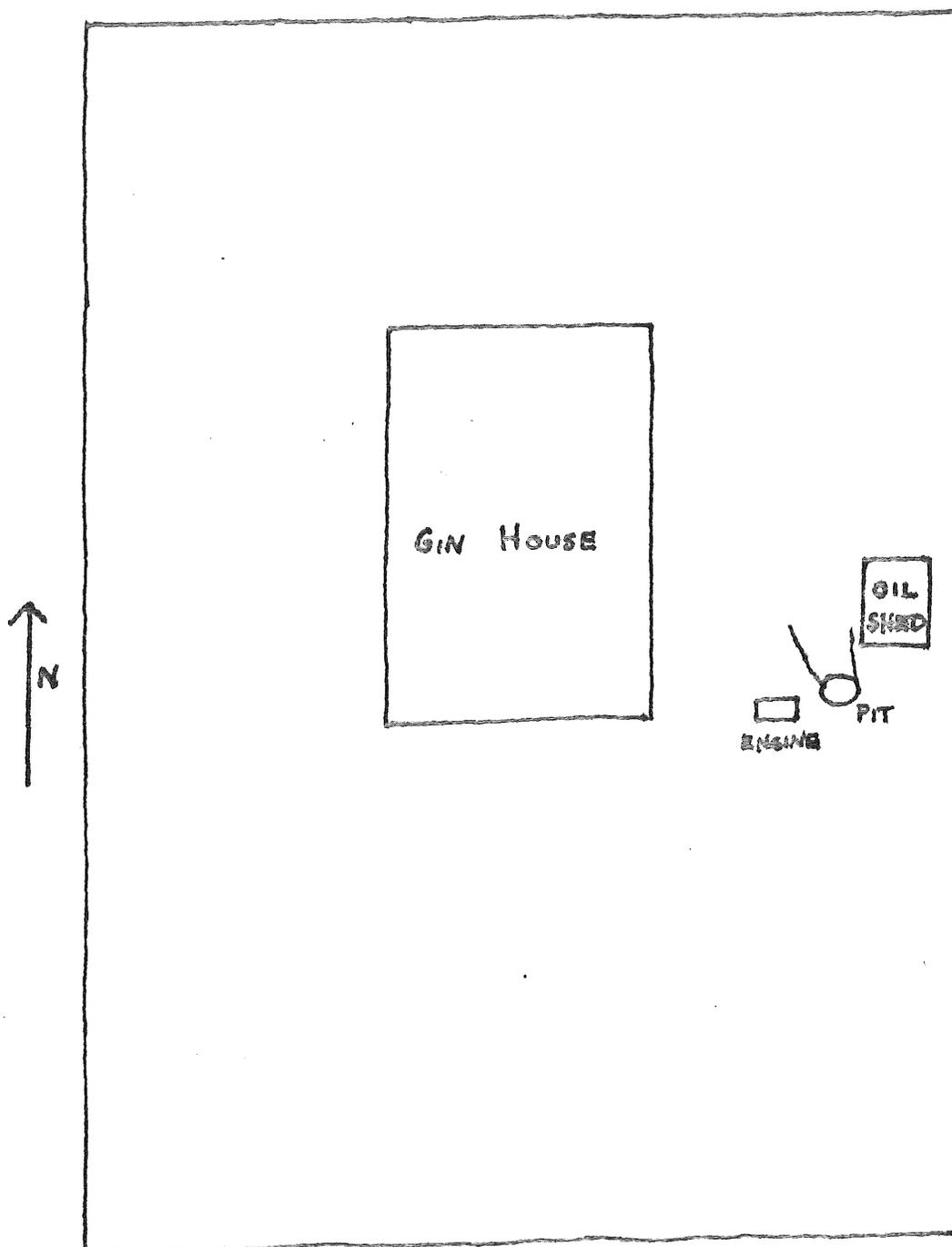
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Verbal boundary description and justification:

The property being nominated consists of an approximately one-half acre, rectangular tract of land with the gin house at its north center, running along SR 2509 125 feet (62.5 feet east and west from the center point of the gin house) and 175 feet in a northerly direction from SR 2509. See attached sketch map. The tract is a portion of a 257.29-acre parcel which appears as block 5 on Wake County tax map number 639, continuing on to map number 640. This smaller tract contains the gin house, exterior engine, possible boiler pit, and oil shed; its boundaries were drawn to include sufficient land to provide a context for the gin house and include possible archaeological remains. The main house of the plantation was destroyed by fire in 1973, and associated buildings survive in scattered locations around the original Walnut Hill plantation tract, which has been subdivided. Without the house to unify these disparate elements, the gin house is being nominated by itself to represent an important element of the cotton culture in North Carolina.

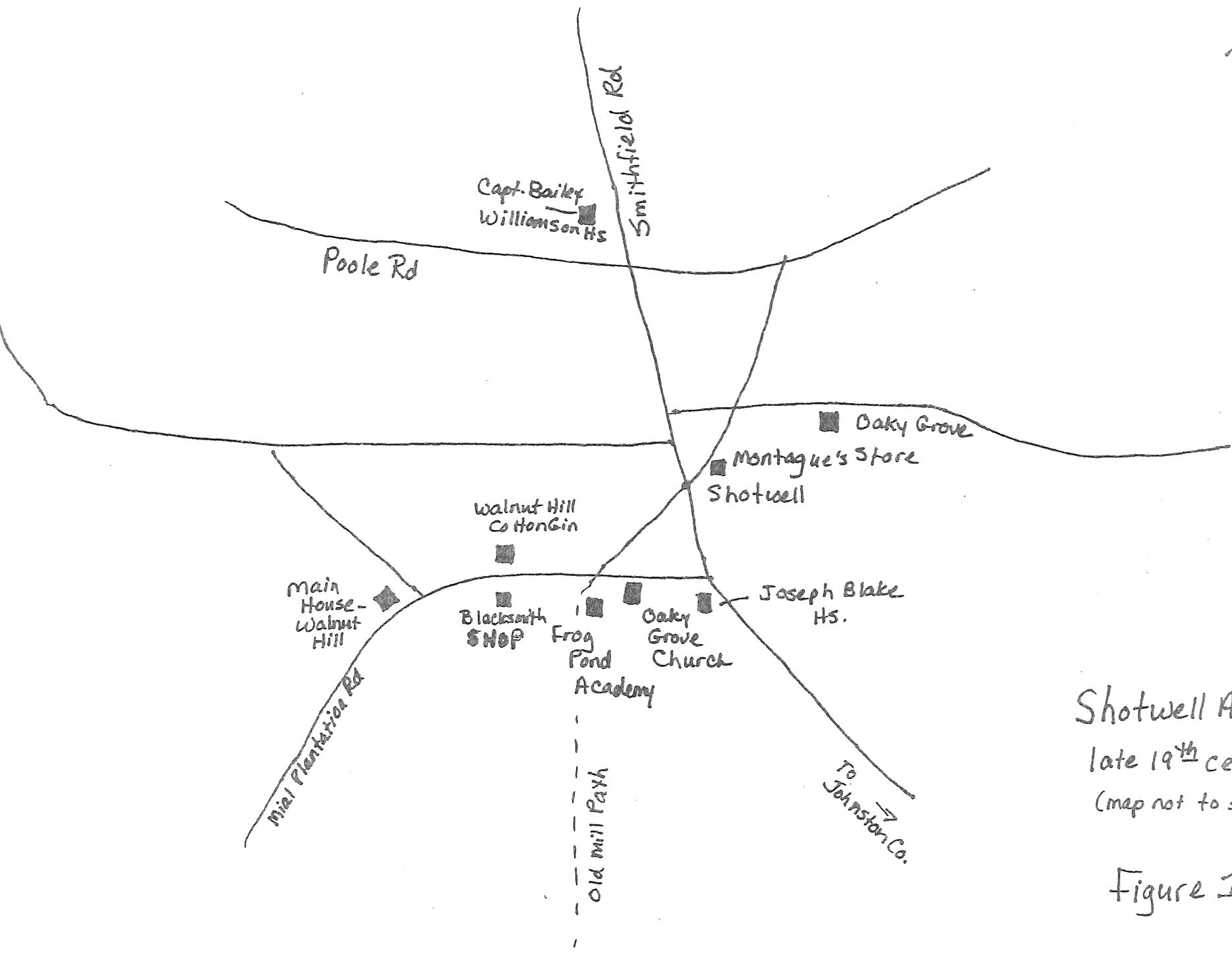
WALNUT HILL COTTON GIN, WAKE COUNTY, N.C.

SCALE: 1" = 25'



SR 2509

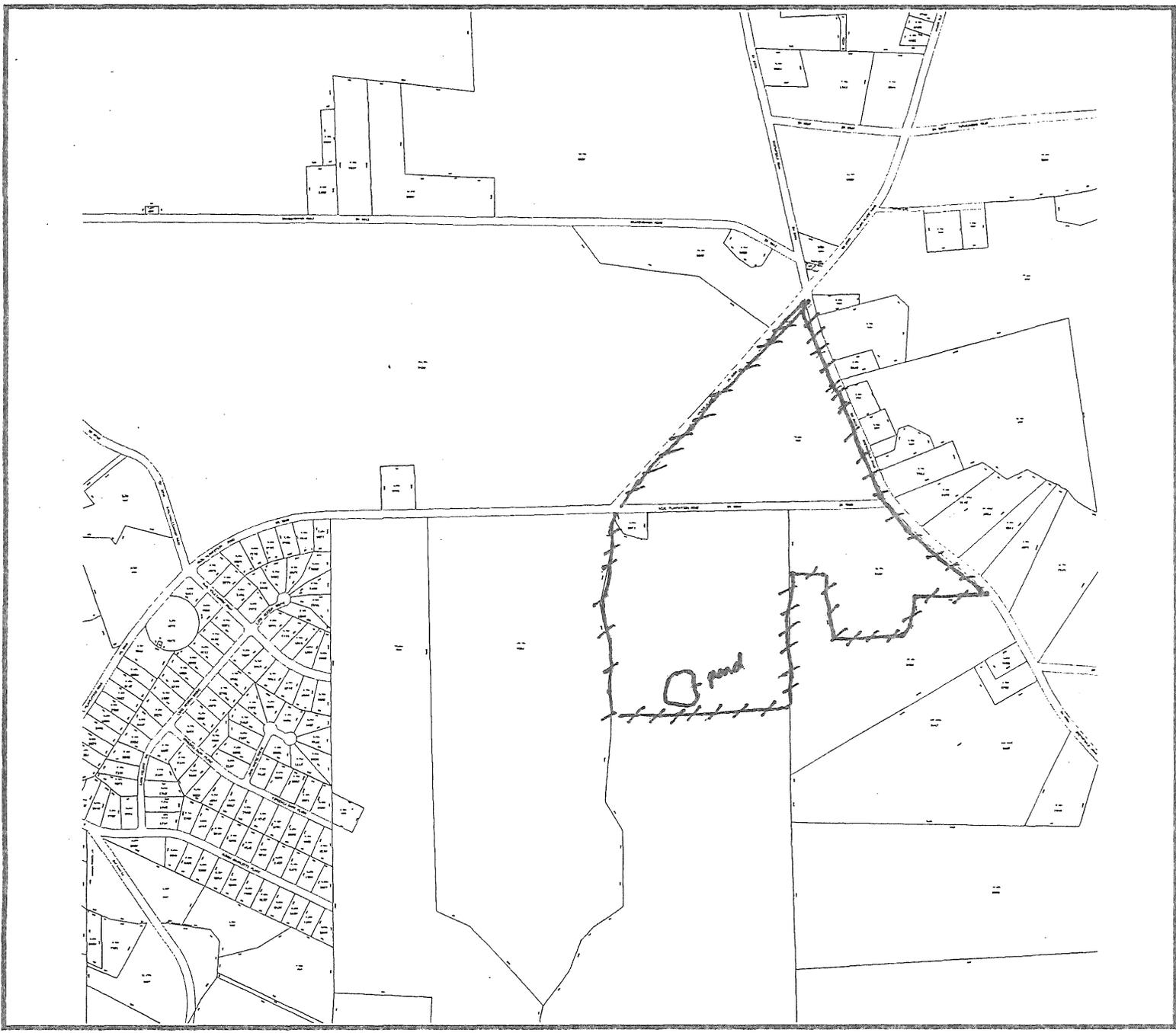
↑N



Shotwell Area  
late 19<sup>th</sup> century  
(map not to scale)

Figure 1

Wake  
County  
*Walnut Hill  
Historic  
District*



Information depicted hereon is for reference purposes only, and is compiled from the best available sources. Wake County assumes no responsibility for errors arising from the reuse of this map.

Scale: 1"-1082'  
Name: PLANPUB  
Date: 08/04/99





