

RURAL PRESERVATION IN AN URBAN SETTING:
ADVOCATING HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MARTINDALE FARM
AS REPRESENTATIVE OF NEW HANOVER COUNTY AGRICULTURE

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ABSTRACT

This paper, based on oral histories, archaeology, geography and historical records, argues for the preservation of rural properties, specifically the Martindale Farm in Wilmington, North Carolina. As a 19th Century representation of a coastal farmhouse, constructed of local resources in the vernacular style, it is worthy of protection from the encroaching urban sprawl. The farm, placed in context with New Hanover County agricultural history, exemplifies various methods of farming through the lives of four generations of a single family. Oral history with the last living relative of the Martindale family to live on the farm, as well as other local farmers, contribute gender and racial diversity to local rural history, traditionally focused on the port and downtown. Artifacts retrieved from an archaeological excavation lend additional supporting evidence to these oral histories. The property's geographic location in the hinterland service area of Wilmington contributed to the farm's economic involvement with the city's transportation modes and public markets.

It is now with the land needs of this expanding Southern city that the house and property come into jeopardy by the zeal of construction developments. Various methods of preservation for the site through recognition designations at the state and local level do not offer total protection, but bring awareness to the situation. This paper advocates shifting the ideals of conservation to include rural sites in local preservation attempts. The Martindale Farm presents a positive model as a case study for rural preservation in an urban environment.

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To get to this point in my life required the assistance of a number of people whom I want to thank for all of their love and support through these last four years. First to my parents John and Monnie Mims for always thinking I could do this even when I was not so sure I could. It was through their friendship with J.P. and Geraldine McGinnis that I met Miss Harriett Johnson and got the idea for this paper. I give great credit to the McGinnises for all of their cooperation of this work, especially with the dig!

There are not enough words to express my appreciation to Dr. Maureen Basedow for arranging the excavation on the Martindale site. She listened to my idea and went to work right away to secure this project, which produced valuable historic information.

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Last, but certainly not least, is the undying love and encouragement provided by my husband, Allen Randall for all the torment I put him through with complaints of computer problems, late night writing schedules and well lets put it like this, Dominos now calls us to ask when they should bring the pizza! I would not even have attempted this program with out this person at my side, thanks!

DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to two people instrumental in assisting this work but are no longer physically here today to enjoy the benefits of this experience with me. They are both owed my thanks.

First to the everlasting memory of Harriett Hunter Johnson (1895-2001) who retained valuable family information to pass on to the future through our oral history sessions. Her stories brought the life of a farmer to reality. She is sure to be pleased that her old house has generated so much interest.

This is also dedicated to the life of my father-in-law, Dr. Duncan P. Randall (1931-2002). Our long discussions about Wilmington history and geography brought out the main ideas for this paper. He constantly encouraged me to stay on track with the program through support and advice. A quote, found in one of his books, sums up my feelings, “Everyman, I will go with thee, and be thy guide, In thy most need to go by thy side.”

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INTRODUCTION: DOCUMENTATION FOR RURAL PRESERVATION

The common themes in public history are these: the insistence that the primary sources for understanding the past are not limited to the written word but encompass buildings, sites, landscapes, artifacts, orally transmitted memories, visual material and electronic records; the insight that it is the broader contexts of local, regional, national, cultural or thematic histories provides meaning to the specific details of the historical problems which public historians are charged with solving, and the understanding that historical work is often teamwork in which individual efforts or expertise must be linked in cooperation with contributions of others.¹

Rural preservation stands outside of the mainstream focus, especially in an area that is driven by its urban history. It is natural that in Wilmington, North Carolina the historic interests focus on the port and downtown business commerce. The town developed along the banks of the Cape Fear River, linking it to the Atlantic Ocean and to the interior portions of the state. Later, with the advent of the railroad, yet another mode of transportation offered additional prosperity through more shipments of commodities. Yet for the most part, the history of the surrounding areas, the rural hinterlands, and the rich agricultural cultivation goes by the wayside. The farmers of New Hanover County contributed to the success of the port with their crops of grains, cotton and vegetables, too. The majority of professions listed in the Wilmington City Directories up to 1945 were that of farmer or farm laborer, which emphasizes the close ties the people held with the land. Now these farmlands are disappearing due to the advancing development brought about by a growing city. With no visible landmarks, farm culture is vanishing along with the diminishing farm population. The current trend in Public History brings together documentation to broaden local history and community identity. This paper will serve to bring out such an entity for the Martindale Farm by using oral histories, historical geography and archaeology as methods to record its local history context

¹ Constance B. Shulz, "Becoming a Public Historian," James B. Gardner and Peter S. LaPaglia, editors, *Public History: Essays From the Field* (Malabar, Florida, Kreiger Publishing Company, 1999), 32.

covering almost 150 years of a single family's ownership beginning in 1823 until 1968. This documentation will assist in preserving one of the last rural farm houses in New Hanover County.

The Martindale Farm is listed as a *plantation* in colonial notations under the name of *Belmeade or Bell Meade Woods* but the word *farm* denotes a more accurate description. The terms farm or farmstead emphasize the yeoman farmer, or according to *The Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, "the man at the center," "the plain folk" who have historically been overlooked.² A farm consists of a group of buildings devoted to specialized tasks such as storage and processing clustered around a kitchen, which better illustrates the Martindale situation.³ However, the term *plantation* holds distinct characteristics involving labor and management, growing crops for commercial distribution, large acreage and crop specialization.⁴ Though by definition this term fits the economics of the Martindale site, but it evokes a romanticized elitist myth that simply does not hold true here. The colonial names of the property, *Belle Meade Woods*, *Belmeade* (the beautiful meadow), serve only as researching tools. Since it remained under the ownership of a single family, Martindale, for approximately one hundred and fifty years, calling the property Martindale Farm better reflects its historical significance.

Farmers and markets are regional identifiers through their economic relationship. Though similar in nature across the country and the south, each region had distinct agricultural practices and experiences. Architectural features, such as houses and barns

² Charles R. Wilson and William Ferris, editors, *The Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, (Chapel Hill, University of Carolina Press, 1989), 587.

³ John R. Stilgoe, *Common Landscapes of America, 1580 to 1845*, (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1982), 205.

⁴ Garnet W. Forster, *Cropper Farming in the Coastal Plain*, (Raleigh, North Carolina, Agricultural Experiment Station, September, 1942), 11.

represent these rural lives, separated from the urban center. The preservation of these items for public exhibition as living history museum farms or conserved structures permeates the United States. Why does New Hanover County not have a comparable public example representing its agricultural history? Records note from its earliest days the contributions made to the economy by local farmers, but with the passing of time and expanding urban growth, their importance has diminished. Southern agriculture evokes thoughts about the monoculture crops of King Cotton and Tobacco, each with adequate regional documentation. However, neither did well in New Hanover County cultivation, leaving the area out of the traditional crop history.

But who fed the hungry stomachs of the local town dwellers? The need for fresh food dominates human existence especially in the time before refrigeration. The grain commodities of corn and wheat served both local and exportation consumption. The production of rice, the only antebellum food crop of plantation lore, fell off drastically after the Civil War due to its intense labor requirements.⁵ The slight documentation of food production and distribution to the local people and its economy allows its importance to slip beneath the historic radar. The Martindale Farm needs reinsertion into the mental map of the community.

The Martindale Farm followed traditional southern coastal agricultural patterns by raising cattle and grains during colonial times and shifted to growing fruits and vegetables after the Civil War. The economic zenith of the site came during the truck farming period in the 1890s with the shipping of produce to northern markets. The focus on the years between 1898 and 1914, known as “The Golden Age of Agriculture” in the

⁵ Wilson and Ferris, *The Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*. 6.

United States, is also reflected in New Hanover County farms.⁶ After World War I, the farming practices became more extractive with the natural resources becoming the products sold. During the entire life of the Martindale Farm, it sent some type of goods into the Wilmington market.

This paper will examine this particular piece of property by looking at its economic structure from pre-colonial times to the present. Studying the Martindale Farm reveals a dual trajectory of farm planning with moneymaking crop choices as well as survivalist alternatives, both of which sustained the occupants. The Martindale Farm also represents two types of marketing concepts: *market gardening* with the selling and distribution of products done locally, and *truck farming* with products shipped primarily to the large produce markets in the northern area of the United States. Questions of class, race and gender on farms are also included in this case study. Independent landowners, the Martindales began in the 1820s at the lower end of the social scale as yeoman farmers, forming the largest social group of the time.⁷ They moved up the economic ladder by utilizing slave labor and adding acreage during the antebellum period. After the Civil War, the family retained these former slaves as hired hands and set aside land for sharecroppers. Generally though, the Martindales worked their own fields. However, during a fifty-year period of this farm's chronicle (1911-1968), the management and maintenance fell on only the women of the family. The women proprietors continued farming by utilizing labor relations established earlier with their former slaves. The Martindale Farm history offers both traditional male agricultural enterprises as well as

⁶ John T. Schlebecker, *Whereby We Thrive, A History of American Farming, 1607-1972*, (Ames, Iowa, The Iowa State University Press, 1975), 151.

⁷ Wilson and Ferris, *The Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, 1384.

the diversity of women and minority involvement presenting a broader interpretation of local history.

Why are the rural links to preservation not emphasized in this area? New Hanover County was once a larger geographical area. In 1875, the County split into two sections: Pender County, the more rural area to the north and east, and New Hanover County, the southern region surrounding the more urbanized Wilmington.⁸ This became the first step in diminishing the agricultural history of the county. The land in New Hanover County was not viable for cotton or tobacco; these traditional crops fared better in the northern areas of what became Pender County. New Hanover County, the southern coastal section, contained a rich soil that proved successful for the cultivation of produce.⁹ While Burgaw in Pender County developed as a small urban center, it did not grow like the city of Wilmington, which began rapidly expanding by annexing lands once used for farming. By the 1960s, this focus on the history of the city began overriding potential for rural farm preservation.

Wilmington historians, consistent with their interpretations, focus on mainstream events of the city, particularly the influence of the ports and the railroad. Agriculture is noted in secondary sources as a small endeavor within the community. Lawrence Lee notes, “Various agricultural products were cultivated but mostly for home consumption and perhaps at the local market.”¹⁰ Nonetheless, in the period prior to refrigeration, the hinterland farmers supplied the local markets with a fresh food supply, an important function by sustaining the urban population. Noted amateur historians of the modern 20th

⁸ Lawrence Lee, *New Hanover County...a brief History*, (Raleigh, North Carolina, Division of Archives and History, 1977), 79.

⁹ Forster, *Cropper Farming in the Coastal Plain*. 5.

¹⁰ Lee, *New Hanover County...a brief History*, 33.

century like Dr. Robert Fales, Andrew Howell and Louis T. Moore rely upon their nostalgic memories of the city's changes. These individual observations came from personal experiences; none of them had ties to the outlying farms. Dr. James Sprunt portrays a more diverse image of the city by including references from the local newspaper about agriculture. He was part of a cotton producing family, so he had personal connections to the land and markets. Pictorial historians such as Diane Cobb Cashman and Anne Russell show visual references to farm production but offer little narrative explaining its economic value. Agricultural trade and industry, composing a small portion of the bulk of County enterprises, contributed more than suggested by these histories.

Searching further into the primary sources -- newspapers, flyers and public records-- reveals a larger rural representation. The *Wilmington Morning Star* published a weekly edition in the years following the Civil War until 1915 called *The Carolina Farmer*. This supplement offered information on fertilizers, husbandry, and market prices as well as current advertisements for products. In the 1860s, the paper suggested farmers keep a daily journal of farm activities to improve business skills as well as crops.¹¹ It is unfortunate that too few farmers had the time to follow this recommendation or the community would benefit from personal experience of life on a local farm. History is biased towards those that write it. Preservation similarly relies on documentation. If it is incomplete, alternative sources fill in the gaps to shape local history. To know more about agriculture in New Hanover County an appropriate spokesperson is needed -- someone connected to the enterprise -- namely a farmer. The methodology of orally transmitted memories becomes a tool to salvage an almost lost identity. Several

¹¹ *Carolina Farmer and Morning Star*, (Wilmington, North Carolina) 5 November 1869.

agricultural historians state, “One of the greatest strengths of oral history is that it can partially redress the class, race and gender imbalances in traditional documentary historical records.”¹² For this study, fifteen local farmers contributed interviews recorded on audio tapes. One of the people interviewed contributed memories specific to the activities and crops of the Martindale Farm. Miss Harriett Hunter Johnson (1895-2001), who in her 104th year actively retained stories once told by her mother, her grandfather and her great grandfather, gave approximately eight hours of dialogue. As a woman farmer, her personal reflections offer an alternative perspective to agriculture. Reviewing all the oral histories adds to New Hanover County history.

An alternative source to human memory is the practice of archaeology, digging to unearth objects found in the land beneath our feet. To excavate a site requires destruction of the area, but is justified by the yields of concrete artifacts for analysis and interpretations. With careful documentation regarding placement of the objects these artifacts support assessments about farm life and economic practices. A noted agricultural historian, John Schlebecker states, “Objects may make a difference as to how the story is told.”¹³ In 2001, the Martindale Farm served as the site of an excavation done in conjunction with the Anthropology Program at the University of North Carolina-Wilmington. The findings, though not complete, support the oral histories and add to the historical significance of the property. Various pipe stems, pottery shards, bottle fragments, metallic objects tell what the memory could not about farm life, supplementing the recorded documents of the Martindale Farm.

¹² LuAnn Jones and Nancy Grey Osterud, “Breaking New Ground: Oral History and Agricultural History” *The Journal of American History*, Volume 76, Issue 2 (September 1989) 556.

¹³ John T. Schlebecker, “The Use of Objects in Historical Research,” Phyllis K. Leffler and Joseph Brent, editors, *Public History Readings*, (Malabar, Florida, Kreiger Publishing Company, 1992), 243.

With so much to offer the community historically, there must be reasons why the Martindale Farm and other rural lands have not attracted public attention thus far. It may be the social perception of the Southern farm does not work with the reality of the situation. The Martindale's vernacular house is simple and plain, not grand as expected of a Southern plantation. Nor is it overly rustic like the idealized log cabin. Moreover, with many of the outbuildings removed from their original location, the uninitiated person's imagination is challenged to envision the entire picture. The land too leaves little room for interpretation with its diminished acreage due to real estate development of the area. Once over 900 acres, the farm now stands at less than ten. However, with its history of class struggles, race relationships and gender issues, the Martindale Farm is a truer representation of Southern farm life than Brunswick County's Orton plantation. These multi-dimensional elements serve as a model to reconstruct a realistic portrait of this County's agriculture.

Maybe rural property has been ignored by New Hanover County preservation efforts due to lack of economic or political value. After all, no one famous lived on this property. Yeomen farmers contributed little to the politics of their time; they attended to the daily needs of a farm. Except for working trips to town, rural people remained isolated from the urban centers until the 20th Century. None of the current political leaders of the community holds connections to farming or rural preservation. Their interest appears focused on annexation and rapid development of empty lands to expand the city and county's tax base. This makes the grounds once used locally for farming more valuable as commercial property than for preserving as a representative landmark

for its shared agricultural history. It is economically more profitable to sell the land than preserve or conserve it unless the property and house acquires a historic designation.

A goal of this paper is to advocate rural preservation in a growing urban environment. There is a need for identification of local farms and an organization to support their protection. History serves to educate by connections, which becomes harder in an urbanized community with no direct associations to the land. How many of today's generation know where their food comes from outside of the supermarket? New Hanover County has very little to show for our agricultural past other than a few documents. Structurally, there is no public example of the agricultural past except the Wilmington City Market, which has been severely altered and no longer functions in its original capacity. The Martindale Farm stands ready to fill this gap and deserves preservation. Mental maps create community identity; as the adage goes, "out of sight, out of mind." There needs to be a visual reminder of this heritage.

Due to encroaching sprawl, this call is urgent. The Martindale Farm is located south of Wilmington in an area that is developing from two opposite directions converging towards it. Real estate developers are looking at the site continuously, as it offers conveyances to road footage, which will connect to additional retail centers and housing expansions. The current owners are older residents who desire to leave a legacy for the future but are in a financial dilemma as to what to do with the property. Funding for additional documentation required for historical certification stands between them and getting the recognition required to protect the property. The National Register of Historical Places designation also opens tax breaks for refurbishing projects, much needed in a two-hundred year old home. Without the backing of individual funding

sources or organized foundations the pressures to develop here may make preservation a moot point thereby leaving a hole in the historical background of the county.

There is some official recognition of the Martindale Farm at the local level. First, it is registered with the Historic Wilmington Foundation (HWF), a local preservation group with a mission to “preserve” and “restore historic buildings” to “enhance the livability of our rich Lower Cape Fear Heritage.”¹⁴ Early research conducted on the property created a file in their office resulting in the placement of a black plaque on the house recognizing its construction prior to 1900. However, the majority of HWF’s work deals with regulations of historic urban residential and commercial districts to maintain a context. Anything located out of the central care of the city commands little activity from the Foundation, which is not truly fulfilling their mission statement. At the 2002 National Preservation Conference, the president of the National Trust of Historic Places suggested that the preservation movement must branch out to “reach new audiences by fully embracing diversity in who we are and what we do.”¹⁵ Maybe this statement will awaken the local community to broaden their perspective.

Even at the more agriculturally conscious state level, the Martindale Farm slipped by early criteria. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) denied significant designation to the house thirty years ago due to changes in the original structure. The current broadening of recognition criteria allowed for a recent acceptance to the study list of the National Register of Historic Places (maintained by the SHPO). The main support behind this change comes from the *combined* alternative documentation, oral history and archaeology, depicting an environmental system of over one hundred years as an intact

¹⁴ www.historicwilmington.org, Historic Wilmington Foundation, Wilmington, North Carolina. 2003.

¹⁵ Richard Moe, “Bringing the Preservation Message to Broader Audiences,” in *Forum Journal*, Volume 17, No.2, winter 2003, 5.

farm. The achievement of National Register designation elevates awareness to the need for rural preservation at all levels and benefits the site.

The priorities to preserve the Martindale Farm need placement in the context of contributions to regional history. As one of the few remaining examples of vernacular architecture, the house is “one of the oldest surviving structures in New Hanover County.”¹⁶ Preservation of farmland in the County deserves as much attention as the downtown Historic District. Without a local organization advocating for this rural cause the focus of preservation remains fixed on the urban setting. Raising public awareness of the Martindale Farm and other rural sites placed in jeopardy due to the demand of housing and retail development, serves to rebuild the mental map of the community. This allows planners and preservationists an opportunity to step back and re-evaluate the urgency of retaining rural lands before none remain.

¹⁶ *Historic Architecture of New Hanover County North Carolina*, (New Hanover County Planning Department, Wilmington, North Carolina, 1986), 132.

CHAPTER ONE: BEFORE LIVING MEMORY – THE MARTINDALE FARM AND PROPERTY

With its columns and white paint, the big house remains the dominant emblem of the antebellum South; it figures in novels and in countless letters written by European and northern observers. But only a rare big house ever attained the now romanticized ideal. ...Most American agriculturalists lived –and still do- in common houses that lack most characteristics of architectural style.¹

Before living memory in North Carolina, the land changed only with the flow of the seasons and the slight influence of the Native peoples. Once white settlers came, they began to make their presence known by altering the landscape to fit their needs for living spaces, cities and agriculture. Change came gradually at first, as forest-filled rural lands fell to the hands of timber industries opening spaces for farming and settlements attracting more people. From Wilmington's 1739 incorporation to 1970, population increases brought in only 45,000, allowing the agricultural areas to remain largely intact.² However, in recent decades, the influx of people to the Coastal South has nearly doubled, placing a larger demand on this environment.³ The drastic impact on the lands once cultivated by farmers in the New Hanover County leaves its former agricultural use fading from living memory. The Martindale property, in Wilmington, serves as an example of the county's agricultural heritage by the progression of changes to the house and property. As noted by cultural geographer, Terry Jordan, "Agricultural landscape changes constantly, it also remains in many respects a window to the past."⁴ Examinations of the farm through its physical evidence give emphasis to its historical significance in regional agriculture.

¹ John R. Stilgoe, *Common Landscapes of America, 1580-1845*, (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1982), 65.

² Lawrence Lee, *New Hanover County...a brief history*, (Raleigh, North Carolina, Division of Archives and History, 1977), 110.

³ United States Federal Census 2000 lists 75,000 in Wilmington, 95,000 in New Hanover County.

⁴ Terry G. Jordan and Lester Rowntree, *The Human Mosaic, A Thematic Introduction to Cultural Geography*, 2nd edition, (New York, Hagentown, Harper and Row Publishers, 1979), 102.

The house of the Martindale Farm is located approximately five miles south of the center of Wilmington. It is also two miles north of Monkey Junction, a once rural crossroads now a prime commercial real estate area. Development creeps towards the city swallowing the land with construction of strip malls and subdivisions. Access to the Martindale site is by way of Carolina Beach Road (Highway 421). It is almost directly across from Silva Terra Drive near the Silver Lake area. The northeast side of the site abuts the current Johnson Farms subdivision, so named to represent the last owner of this land. The main street through the subdivision terminates at the Martindale property line. This placement jeopardizes the preservation of the farm on a dual front.

Turning off the main road onto a dirt lane, Belle Meade Woods Road, it is hard to image the crux of development surrounding on all sides. Pine trees and shrubbery line the way toward the house, allowing a moment to remember what these rural lands resembled a century earlier. Several relatives live in separate dwellings on parcels of the original property, forming a small community of their own with the old farmhouse at its center. However, urban sprawl is on the way. Looking northward at the rear of the property, rooftops of nearby subdivisions are visible, and the hammering of additional construction is heard, making the former Martindale home look out of place.

This dwelling, the only reminder of what was once a large farming community in the Masonboro Township, is a 19th century coastal frame house. [Figure 1] According to Ed Turberg, a local architectural historian, “this rambling farmhouse is one of the oldest structures in New Hanover County.”⁵ The black plaque by the front door denotes recognition by the Historic Wilmington Foundation. It gives a brief chronology of the

⁵ *Historic Architecture of New Hanover County North Carolina*, (Wilmington, New Hanover County Planning Department, 1986), 132.



Figure 1. Martindale-McGinnis House- Wilmington, North Carolina, Spring 2001

Martindale family with only a minimal mention of occupation as “farmer.” The lack of rustic and weathered tones on its exterior shell, kept at bay by vigilant maintenance, leaves one to question the authenticity of the structure. With its coating of pale yellow paint, the structure could easily pass as contemporary at first glance. The present owners, Mr. and Mrs. J.P. McGinnis, brought the house to modern code specifications to live comfortably in the dwelling. Though controversial changes break from the historical building practices, the core of the existing house remains intact. Through its structural changes, the house(s) implies one history of the farmstead. During periods of the farm’s success, the house acquired additions, but when the farm’s economic viability declined, maintenance to the house did too. Reviewing the historical sequence of the house(s) places it in context with New Hanover County rural heritage as a representation of the vernacular style.

In preserving structures and property, the National Register of Historic Places supplies criterion of significance. The Martindale Farm, now accepted to their study list, met three out of four of these requirements. This first chapter examines two of these; distinctive architectural characteristics (the houses) and archaeological sequencing (potential yield of the land). The Second and Third Chapters detail the Martindale family’s “significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history” over a 150-year period of their ownership.⁶ The Fourth Chapter advocates the rural preservation issues faced by sites overwhelmed by urban focus. The Martindale Farm is worthy of preservation.

⁶ National Register Fact Sheet 2, State Historic Preservation Office, Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources.

Colonial Period (1730-1790) - Belmeade

This period poses questions of the farm or plantation's viability. The colonial property records show a large amount of acreage under the specific name of *Belmeade*, but offer no indication of economic activity. The establishment of property ownership with some evidence of a dwelling indicates the possibility of use, with the support of archaeological artifacts dating to this time frame.

Wilmington, chartered as a city in 1739, matured along the banks of the Cape Fear River. This river opens directly into the Atlantic Ocean, and branches into the central portions of the state, the only one in North Carolina that does so.⁷ Shipping became the primary economic source since water transportation optimized the colonial exports centered on naval stores industries of tar, pitch and turpentine. The city grew eastward parallel to the water, and a central business district developed along Market and Front Streets. The city became a break-of-bulk point to the interior regions up the river giving support to settlements in the hinterlands, which developed with the establishment of large plantations on both side of the Cape Fear River.⁸

English settlers arriving in the area as early as the 1660s came either directly from England or by way of the plantation systems in the Caribbean Islands. They brought with them many traditions, one being “an abounding and diverse agricultural heritage.”⁹ New Hanover County soil, rich and fertile, attracted planters to its virgin grounds. The

⁷ Alan D. Watson, *Wilmington, Port of North Carolina*, (Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1992), 3.

⁸ Lawrence Lee, *New Hanover County...a Brief History*, (Raleigh, North Carolina, Division of Archives and History, 1977), 12. Break-of-bulk is a term to describe the process of shipping in one mode of transportation, then switching to another type for delivery.

⁹ James Sprunt, *Chronicles of the Cape Fear River 1600-1916*, 2nd edition (Wilmington, Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1992), 31 and 46.

transportation advantages of a nearby port made lands in areas like Masonboro Township, south of Wilmington, even more desirable.

The acreage of the Martindale Farm, known by the name of *Belmeade* or Belle Meade Woods during the colonial period, fit a partial description of a plantation. Planters acquired vast amounts of acreage of 500 to 1000 acres to sustain a system of growing moneymaking staple crops. In this area, due to its geographical proximity to freshwater, that commodity was rice.¹⁰ Most plantations had at least twenty enslaved Africans as laborers, especially for rice production.¹¹ However, colonial records of *Belmeade* owners do not enumerate slaveholders. The supposition is that the name *Belmeade* applied to blanket acreage, which could be developed into a productive plantation. By the late 1700s, this land, bundled into smaller sections, retained this same name. A 1776 map of the Lower Cape Fear establishing the locations of plantations in this period does not show *Belmeade*.¹² [Figure 2] This may mean the plantation was either not successful or fully functional to bear mention as a landmark for travelers. Who owned the land originally, who named it, and what the initial agricultural intent was is lost from the records for the present.

What definitely is known about this property is the presence of a house. This is not the one standing on the Martindale Farm today but remnants of an earlier structure called a “Virginia House.” Southern colonists commonly erected earth fast wooden buildings that either sat directly on the ground or were embedded in the earth with postholes. The light framing system simplified construction, making this late 17th century vernacular

¹⁰ Orton Plantation in Brunswick County stands as a visual reminder of a North Carolina rice plantation.

¹¹ Michael Conzen, editor, *The Making of the American Landscape*, (New York, Routledge Press, 1994), 390.

¹² Sprunt, *Chronicles of the Cape Fear River*, 70.

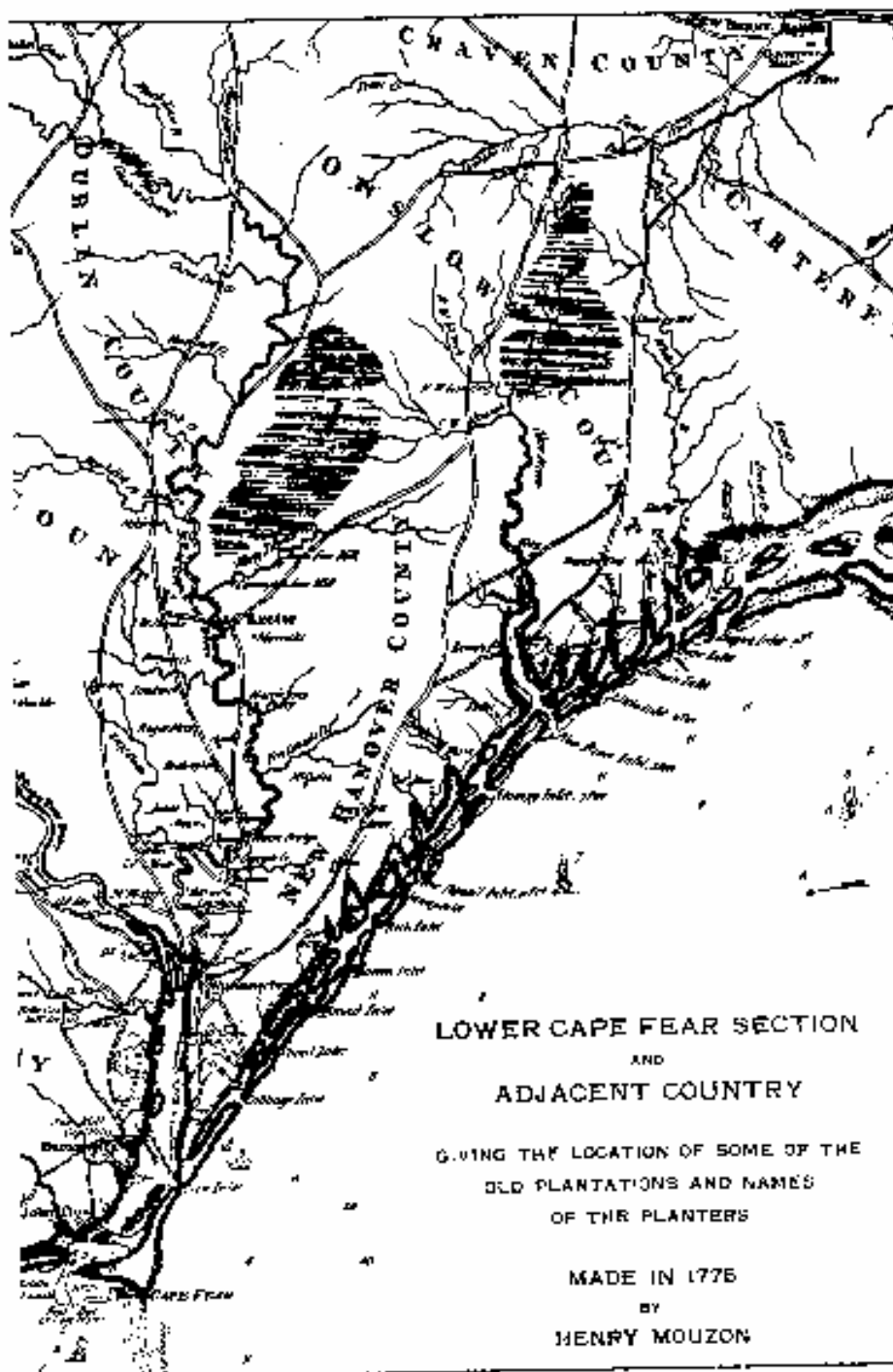


Figure 2. 1775 Plantation Map of the Lower Cape Fear

style predominant in the Chesapeake Bay area, hence the name “Virginia House.”¹³ Most were small: one (hall) or two room (hall and parlor) plans, a gabled-end chimney, one story with a possible loft, between twelve and twenty feet in length.¹⁴ Planters migrating from the Virginia colony and English settlers bringing traditional building methods could adapt this style. When coming to a new area, a simple shelter constructed of local materials provided protection while clearing the land of timber. According to John Stilgoe, a cultural geographer, “many settlers never intended their first dwellings to be permanent houses.”¹⁵

Evidence found on the Martindale Farm fits the description of the “Virginia House.” A recent archaeological excavation of the property under the site name Martindale-McGinnis (MM), conducted by Dr. Maureen Basedow through the anthropology program at University of North Carolina-Wilmington in the spring of 2001, concluded that a structure was present on the property in the late 1700s.¹⁶ An earth-fast structure leaves marks in the soil, allowing an archaeologist to note the posts position in the ground. The excavation revealed posthole stains, with decomposed wood pieces at precise measurements signifying intended, not random, placement. A wood beam stain, possibly a foundation support, gave orientation to the position of the house. [Figure 3] With most earth fast buildings, the dirt served as flooring. In this situation, however, evidence of

¹³ Catherine Bishir, Charlotte Brown, Carl R. Lounsbury and Ernest H. Wood III, *Architects and Builders in North Carolina: A History of the Practice of Building*, (Chapel Hill and London, University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 16.

¹⁴ Ibid, 18.

¹⁵ John R. Stilgoe, *Common Landscapes of America*, 100.

¹⁶ Maureen Basedow, *North Carolina Archaeology*, (Wilmington, North Carolina) Forthcoming analysis.



a.



b.

Figure 3. a- Beam Stain and Post Hole b- Chimney Stack Ruin
Wilmington, North Carolina 2001

floor planking suggests an upgrade to the plan.¹⁷ Owner preference or a later construction date explains this variance.

In addition to the post stains, a chimney ruin outlines a plan similar to the “Virginia House.” Brick and ballast stones material composed the chimneystack. With no natural quarry in the vicinity, these may have come from ships porting in Wilmington, linking the property with the city. Upon further investigation, holes near the stack suggested earlier log supports, denoting an older mud and wood chimney. Brick chimneys do not require wood riggings. These former log holes, in alignment with the beam slot, also supports the “Virginia House” plan. According to Cary Carson, “Hole set chimneys are regularly encountered on excavated sites,” especially one in York County, Virginia named *River Creek*.¹⁸ Assessing these finds assists with dating the property to the colonial period as well as providing a connection to the typical vernacular style of the time. [Figure 4] Other archaeological artifacts recovered from the excavation suggest occupation of the dwelling. Pipe bowls and stems (diagnostic tools used in research) found at the Martindale site place a large amount in the 1710-1770 range. These common, inexpensive items were readily available during the colonial period. Preliminary indications from ceramic assemblage place dates between 1780 and 1820.¹⁹ These fragments of stoneware, pottery and china indicate someone lived in the house within the late colonial period, even if no agricultural endeavors occurred in the Colonial Period.

¹⁷ Cary Carson, Norman F. Barka, William M. Kelso, Garry Wheeler Stone and Dell Upton, “Impermanent Architecture in the Southern American Colonies,” Robert Blair St. George, editor, *Material Life in America, 1600-1860* (Boston: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 126.

¹⁸ Ibid. 124.

¹⁹ <http://people.uncwil.edu/basedown/mm/home.html> Martindale-McGinnis Site Webpage. University of North Carolina-Wilmington, North Carolina, 2001.

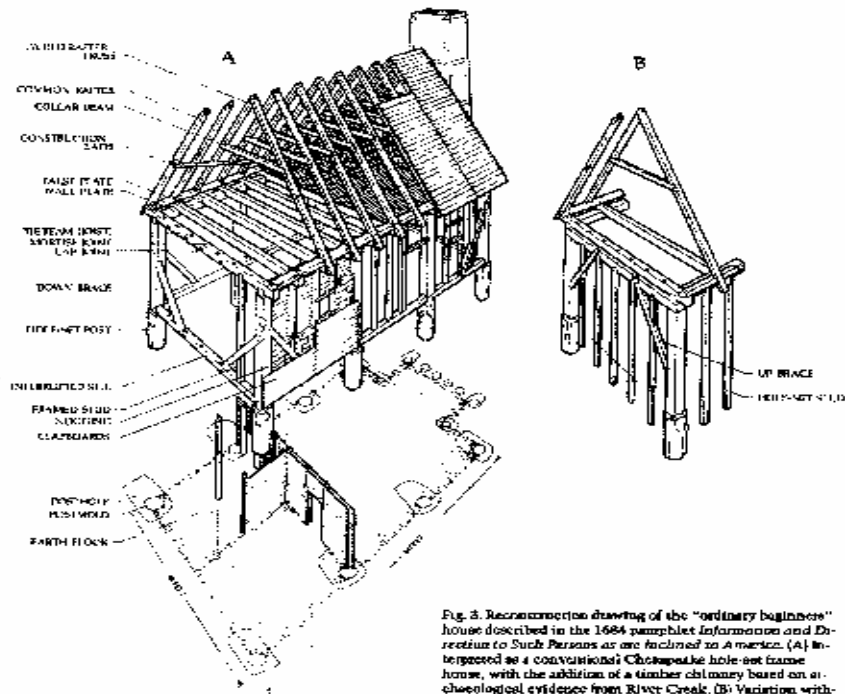


Fig. 3. Reconstruction drawing of the "ordinary baginners" house described in the 1684 pamphlet *Information and Direction to Such Persons as are Inclined to America*. (A) Interpreted as a conventional Chesapeake hole-set frame house, with the addition of a timber chimney based on archaeological evidence from River Creek. (B) Variation without sills showing hole-set scuds, up braces, tilted false plates, and a possible interpretation of the two eighteen-foot spanning plates called for in the specifications that are otherwise difficult to explain. [Drawing by Cary Carson and Chung Hwang.]

Fig. 2. Development of St. John's, St. Mary's City, Maryland. The house was built in 1538, variously altered thereafter—extensively in 1678—and was finally leased as a tavern until about 1720. [Drawing by Shannon Vaughn and Cary Carson.]

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Sketch of "Virginia House" from Cary Carson, et al, "Impermanent Architecture in the Southern Colonies" from *Material Life in America, 1600-1860*, Robert Blair St. George, editor, 1988.

Figure 4. "Virginia House" Sketch Plan

Who lived there, owners, tenants or hired laborers, remains uncertain. Early colonial land titles are often overlapping and meandering, requiring years of precise dissection to establish and clarify. The first name mentioned in conjunction with the colonial plantation *Belmeade* is Joseph Newton, who in 1767 acquired, “200 acres in New Hanover on the east side of the Cape Fear River opposite to the lower end of the Flatts near the great Island, joining a sand hill nigh a water pond and a point below a small cove.”²⁰ The Newton family, established riverboat pilots, traveled the river from Wilmington to Southport and Fort Fisher. His son, James, purchased 300 additional acres (also *Belmeade* grounds) from William Moseley in 1794.²¹ Whether James built a house on this property or a house already existed, is hard to verify. One supposition is that the Newtons did not construct a dwelling on these grounds is due to their careers as river pilots. Therefore, this section of *Belmeade* may have permitted the Newton men ownership rights, a status necessary for voting in the Colonial period, while never living or producing on the land.

Another family associated with this plantation site may have established the first house on the property. A patent from William Dry to John Guerard names the adjacent property as *Belmeade*, listing Dr. James Fergus as owner in 1776.²² Fergus transferred the land to his son John, also a physician, upon his death in 1785.²³ When Dr. John Fergus died at his *Belmeade* plantation in 1802, his will divided the property into four equal parts among family for use of heirs.²⁴ A subsequent advertisement in the

²⁰ *Colony of North Carolina, Abstracts of Land Patents 1765-1775, Volume II*, (Wilmington, North Carolina), 420.

²¹ New Hanover County Minutes 1794-1800, (Wilmington, North Carolina), 57.

²² New Hanover County Minutes 1771-1785, (Wilmington, North Carolina), 21.

²³ According to New Hanover County Minutes 1786-1793, this Dr. Fergus also held administrator title to the Newton estate in 1788, indicating the men knew each other and the properties nearby.

²⁴ New Hanover County Wills, D. (Wilmington, North Carolina, County Courthouse).

Wilmington Gazette, April 9, 1805 implies that a portion of the property detached from the Fergus family.

Wanted- Some person to take charge of the plantation property formerly the residence of Dr. John Fergus, deceased. On which there is a good dwelling house, and other buildings convenient for the accommodations of a family, apply to Joshua G. Wright.

This establishes the presence of a house on *Belmeade* property in the late 1700s, probably in the style of a “Virginia House,” which for the remainder of this paper shall be referred to as the Fergus house. Whether the house remained occupied on a full or part time basis is unclear. There is also no evidence to establish specific crop cultivation at the present. However, the location near the Cape Fear River alludes to the water transportation of goods into the city for export, and the ballast stones on the property indicate a transportation link with the port in Wilmington.

For the Martindale property, the existence of the vernacular dwelling, probably in the common “Virginia House” style, plus the artifacts assemblage offers the most concrete evidence for early dating of the property. However, these elements provide little clue to agricultural viability, warranting further research into occupancy and use by the known families.

Federal Period (1790- 1845) - Henry Martindale

The years following the Revolutionary war reveal *Belmeade* plantation’s transition into a solid farmstead under Martindale family ownership. The current house, constructed during this time frame, offers a visible example to the country’s vernacular heritage. Public record offers statistics to support its agricultural past. However, it is through the life story of Harriett Hunter Johnson, the last Martindale relative to live on the property that this period switches to living memory.

Henry Martindale (1796-1874) acquired possession of the land known as *Belmeade* in 1823 with the issue of a 160-acre patent “below the town of Wilmington on the Cape Fear.”²⁵ This transaction probably included the property with the Fergus house. Family oral history recalls a structure already on site as well as a pear orchard and grape vines.²⁶ Since this feature existed on site, it more than likely served as Martindale’s residence until he built his own house between 1824 and 1827. John Stilgoe states that the construction of a residence suggests the clearest evidence of occupation as “Southerners recognize the house as key to land ownership.”²⁷ This Martindale hand-built house stands on the property today.

This vernacular structure is a representative example of a coastal frame house of the 19th century.²⁸ The foundation of heart of pine logs rests on a rock slab, not posts stuck in the ground, implying permanence of structure. Martindale almost certainly built the house himself as was typical for the time. The chosen site, on slightly elevated grounds, near the earlier construction, allowed for a more permanent status. As Cary Carson recognizes, “Higher was drier and drier was definitely better.”²⁹ Using nearby resources of pine and cypress trees and hand hewing the wood instead of milling was common for the period. The rafters and framing exhibit the ship lapping technique of jointure. The numbered sections are pinned together with wooden pegs. Rough half timbers embellish the ceilings without any attempt to hide the framing material, typical of vernacular work. The windows are from hand blown glass showing multiple variances. The interior doors

²⁵ Elizabeth McKoy, *Early New Hanover County Records* (Wilmington, North Carolina, 1973), 31.

²⁶ Harriett Hunter Johnson, interview by author, tapes and notes, 23 March 2000.

²⁷ Stilgoe, *Common Landscapes*, 65.

²⁸ *Historic Architecture of New Hanover County*, 132.

²⁹ Carson, et al, “Impermanent Architecture in the Southern American Colonies,” in *Material Life in America*, 126.

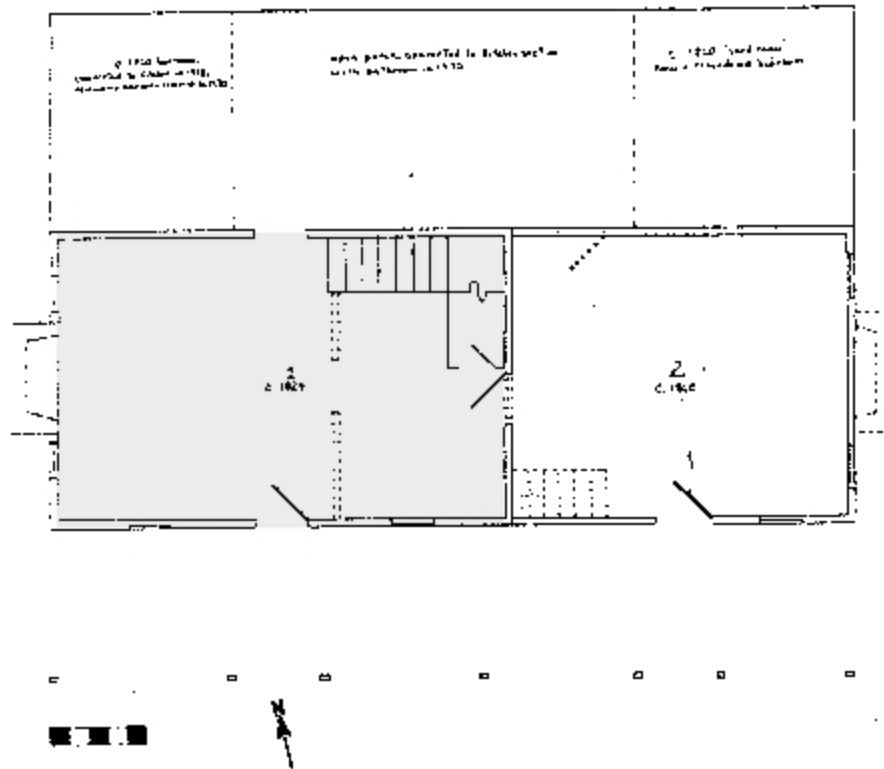
were constructed of handcrafted pine. The floorboards are approximately 12 inches wide and jointed. Cypress, a naturally water repellent material, composed the shingles on the roof and the siding, which was cut into four-foot sections. Except for the windowpanes, all materials are indigenous to the site.

The original floor plan follows the hall and parlor style of a Tidewater house. [Figure 5] Such coastal cottages were common along 1500 miles of Atlantic coastline during the early 1800s.³⁰ The length of the house measures 15 feet by 15 feet, with the front rooms, divided by a partition making them 7 ½ feet each. The entry doorway is on a non-gabled presentation with one of two chimneys still visible on the gabled ends. The steep shoulder chimney constructed of bricks remains on the west end. A porch of wood covered the entire front side. A smaller porch was on the back of the house, off a small room. The kitchen, detached from the house, stood near the western side far enough away to not produce a fire hazard. One entire side contained a long cooking hearth of bricks. All features exhibit common nineteenth-century vernacular construction by nonprofessionals.

The house represents only part of a farm system, as a farmstead requires a number of out buildings. A farm is an economic entity and the outbuildings are a unit with the house, the fields and the yards.³¹ Each of these structures served a specific purpose revolving around the storage or processing the farm products. Unlike farms in the northern regions of the United States, specialized buildings on southern farms were few

³⁰ Fred B. Kniffen, "Folk Housing: Key to Diffusion" in *Common Place, Readings in American Vernacular Architecture*, editors Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach, (Athens and London, The University of Georgia Press, 1986), 19.

³¹ Charles R. Wilson and William Ferris, editors, *The Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina, 1989), 67.



MARTINDALE HOUSE
First-Floor Plan

Figure 5. Martindale House Plan (Shaded area is original)

and small.³² The largest of these are the livestock stables containing the mules and horses. There is evidence of the stables by the irregularities of the ground east of the house where Martindale family oral history notes location. Another common structure, the granary, held bulk storage of grain and field crops. These Tidewater structures were generally 20 feet wide and between 20 and 40 feet long, standing about waist high and open, with sides constructed out of flush boards.³³ Since Martindale raised cattle and cultivated corn for both human and animal consumption, it is likely the farm contained a granary. Although no longer extant, family history suggests a location east of the main house. Here is another area for further archaeological research.

In this period, the house and property come under the ownership of the Martindales. Considered a small farm at 160 acres, the construction of a newer house and outbuildings denotes both permanence of occupancy and agricultural activity. The Martindale family appeared ready to stay and farm. Thus originates a period of economic success for both the farm and the family.

Antebellum (1845- 1865) - Father and Son

The decades immediately preceding the Civil War, are generally depicted as the “golden age” of Southern agriculture, with planters reaping the profitability of cotton, tobacco and rice crops. The Martindales as farmers, not plantation owners with vast acreage and gangs of slaves, enjoyed success on another level. The purchase of additional acreage as well as structural improvements to the house shows the viability of the farm. Stabilization during this period continues to identify the farm as a regional independent farm, and leads to its success following the Civil War as well.

³² Ibid, 66.

³³ Ibid.

By 1845, Henry Martindale added to his property by purchasing 128 acres from Mr. James S. Newton.³⁴ At this time, Martindale owned 435 acres, three female slaves, and \$500 worth of land. He paid three dollars and fifty-one cents in county taxes that year.³⁵ He also bought beach lands along the Masonboro Sound banks. Another acquisition followed with the patent of Myrtle Grove Sound property bought from William Harper in 1857. This added a 36-foot strip giving “Martindale access to the sound from his extensive estate to the west.”³⁶ The community salt works lay near this area also. Together with his son Henry Alexander (H.A.), he practiced mixed agriculture, growing cotton along with vegetables, as well as raising cattle. The land by the water was necessary for his free roaming herd of cattle. The borders of his property gave access to the river on one side, the sound on another, with Barnard’s creek, and Fergus ditch closing the perimeters. Neighbors on adjacent properties included the Craig, Horne and Trask families, all related to the Martindale family.³⁷

The Martindale farm by 1864 warranted inclusion on a Confederate States of America area map, where as *Belmeade* did not make a 1776 record.³⁸ [Figure 6] Its location near the main thoroughfare, the Federal Point Road (also called Confederate Point Road) made it a stopping point for travelers and vendors coming and going into Wilmington. The roads became more useable during this period. The Martindales traveled to town by way of this road to sell products. However, they also utilized waterway transportation

³⁴ McKoy, *Early New Hanover County Records*, 31.

³⁵ New Hanover County, North Carolina Tax Lists 1815 and 1845 Abstracts, 78.

³⁶ Isabel M. Williams and Leora H. McEachern, *Salt- That Necessary Article*, (Wilmington, North Carolina, 1973), 153.

³⁷ Will of Henry Martindale 1874. New Hanover County Courthouse, Wilmington, North Carolina.

³⁸ Sprunt, *Chronicles of the Cape Fear*, 419.

and shipped products to town via flat bottom boats on the creeks to the river. This may be another reason its position was included on a map.

Additions made to the family house during this period represent the farm's achievement. The prosperity seen in acquisition of acreage also included changes to the family living quarters. Suggestions from a local newspaper stated, "a good farmer is the man who improves his land and the appearance of his place..."³⁹ Pride of place, economic success or simply outgrowing the vernacular structure gave way to construction of a formal parlor downstairs. This room, measuring 15 feet by 17 ½ feet, permitted additional space for social gatherings. The flooring in this room is continuous tongue in groove without any joints. These boards, milled off site and shipped back, denote the family's ability to splurge on the extra cost of not doing it themselves. A steep shouldered brick chimney on the new east end mirrored the older one on the west end. The upstairs gained a supplementary bedroom with the construction of the parlor below. This allowed two chambers on the upper level and one down. This addition's estimated construction is between the years 1850 to 1870.⁴⁰ With father and son farming the same land, the original plan of the house became too small to accommodate the two families living together.

Antebellum farms flourished for the most part in the New Hanover County area; the Martindale farm is just one of the many. With additions to the house and property, their success became visible to the community. Their independence, with assistance of slaves, met the challenge of a productive farmstead. The earlier Fergus House probably became the living quarters for the slaves. The Martindales never owned a large number of slaves,

³⁹ *Carolina Farmer and Morning Star*, (Wilmington, North Carolina), 5 November 1869.

⁴⁰ *Historic Architecture of New Hanover County*, 132.

the most being five, so a small, multi-room house would have fit the situation. Its proximity to the main house where the family lived placed the slaves within monitoring sight. It was constructed of comparatively inferior building materials, as expected for a slave cabin.⁴¹ Artifactual finds in this area support occupation with items such as bottles and ceramics dating to the 1830s-1850s.⁴² However, it is also interesting what the artifacts do not show.

There are numerous family stories of heroic acts during the Civil War. Alleged attacks of raiding Union troops on the farm account for the still present bullet holes in the front siding. Women, afraid and alone with the men serving with the Home Guard at Fort Fisher, banded together for protection at the various farms in the area. They shifted places from week to week or month to month but never left the farm unattended for very long. However, the artifact assemblage provides no solid evidence of family occupation of the main house at this time. Bottle fragments from cheap wines and beer dating to this period are found only in the area of the slave cabin, which before this time frame contained none. This leads to one theory that the ladies left the farm in the care of a person of little repute or that squatters moved in. Additional artifacts may turn up later in another area of the property but at the present, the physical evidence does not support the oral histories.⁴³ Such is the lore for “lost cause” nostalgia.

Reconstruction (1865-1877) - Tenancy

Following the Civil War a shift in labor on the farm occurred. The 1870 Federal Census enumerates “Martendill,” his family and one white servant while estimating his

⁴¹ <http://people/uncwil.edu/basedow/mm/home/html>

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Personal communication Dr. Maureen Basedow, 2001.

real estate value at \$3000.⁴⁴ Comparing this to the 1860 census listing five slaves presents an issue for this generation: how to farm with hired help instead of slaves. Sharecropping or tenant farming developed during Reconstruction allowing economic prosperity to the owner while keeping the land viable despite drastic changes in labor resources. The tenants worked the land while the owner provided accoutrements such as tools. The division of the season's profits followed according to a pre-contracted amount mainly halves (50-50 division) or quarters ($\frac{3}{4}$ to owner, $\frac{1}{4}$ to tenant).⁴⁵ After the sale of the cotton or vegetables, the family received their portion.

The Martindale family follows agricultural patterns as the son, H.A. takes charge with the farm's structural dynamics shifting with new parceling of the land. Upon Henry Martindale's death in 1874, the total of his 500 acres was split equally between his son Henry Alexander (1837-1911) and daughter Agnes Biddle (1845-?). Henry Alexander retained the front portion to the south and east of the division line while Agnes owned the section to the north and west. With Agnes living on another farm with her husband near Myrtle Grove, H. A. managed her section now called Biddle property. While Henry A. received ownership of the houses and half the stock of cattle, Agnes took compensation with \$200 to equalize the value.⁴⁶ The property totals remained the same under the Martindale family name but now with a break up of the economic profits.

New South (1877-1910) – Henry Alexander Martindale

The 1880 Federal Census lists the Martindale family as husband, wife and three children, Rebecca, Owen and Catherine, along with one white servant and two black

⁴⁴ 1870 Federal Census Abstract, 23.

⁴⁵ Conzen, *The Making of the American Landscape*, 122.

⁴⁶ 1874 Will of Henry Martindale, New Hanover County Records of Wills, E, (Wilmington, North Carolina), 266.

(male) laborers.⁴⁷ Martindale continued to work the lands nearest the house but parceled out sections to others for farming. The 1885 tax listing enumerates his house and immediate property in addition to two sections of 225 and 170 acres recorded with other names as residents.⁴⁸ This acreage, probably located in the Masonboro Sound area, eventually detached from Martindale ownership. The shift in labor brought about a change in agricultural production making the lands near the water no longer necessary due to the depletion of their cattle stock. By this time, the focus of their cultivation turned to vegetable crops, which branched into truck farming, the peak of agricultural production in New Hanover County during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Henry Alexander Martindale owned approximately 975 acres by the turn of the 20th Century.

Changes in both dwellings were made in this time. The main house acquired a detached sleeping shed probably used for the domestic white help as listed in the various censuses. While assisting the farmer's wife with household chores, living in close proximity makes sense. The Fergus House slave cabin now became home to the Martindale's black laborers. According to oral history, these people were descendants of the Martindale's former slaves.⁴⁹

At this time, the property probably contained a stable, a corncrib, a smokehouse and milk shed. Supplying the farm's main animal power, mules were sheltered in the established stables to the east of the main house. A corncrib, which is a smaller structure than the older granary at 10 feet square, connected directly to the stable. This became the more common feature on southern farms in the late 1800s.⁵⁰ The smokehouse aided in

⁴⁷ United States Federal Census Abstracts, 1880. The distinction of tenant was not recorded.

⁴⁸ New Hanover County Tax Lists, Abstract, 25 and 43.

⁴⁹ Johnson interview, 16 May 2000.

⁵⁰ Wilson and Ferris, *The Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, 66.

processing the family's pork products. These earth fast structures were "most common, small square buildings 8 to 12 feet on a side...standing close to the house."⁵¹ Canned or "put-up" vegetables and fruits, sugar, cane syrup and other goods were also stored in this space. Oral history places this building out by the old kitchen to the west of the main house. While none of these structures survives at the present, the milk shed or dairy house does.

The milk shed served as a receptacle for all dairy products such as eggs, butter, milk and cream. The product's freshness maintained for longer periods with the assistance of a covered building.⁵² Placing these structures directly over a running stream sometimes assisted in keeping the interior cooler, hence another name for the structure, springhouse. This surviving Martindale milk shed stands approximately six feet tall and four to five feet square, constructed with milled lumber. [Figure 7] A door opens halfway down to allow entrance without exposing the entire interior to outside conditions. Its original placement near the house and kitchen provided easy accessibility.

The physical structures on the property represent only a portion of farm as the "largest divisions of the farmstead are the yards and fields themselves."⁵³ The fields closest to house supplied gardens for family consumption, while the fields further out produced the money crops. Natural barriers, such as the woods, kept livestock at a distance from the house. In the south farmers accomplished these divisions without the use of fences by using trees, bushes and creeks to section the areas. Man-made ditches, serving to drain the low-lying areas, encircled the fields and the house property disconnecting it from the

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid, 67.



Figure 7. Martindale Farm Milk Shed (Wilmington 2001)

workspaces. A survey of the Martindale farm noted all of these features on the property. This plot used the metes and bounds system of measuring, a common practice done with original east coast colonial lands.⁵⁴ The property measurements (metes) were taken by using chains while the bounds held natural features as markers.⁵⁵ The property lines for the Martindale farm, clearly documented in a 1904 survey by H. Meather, used these measurements in the following description;

Beginning at a pine South 78° east 2.50 chains to a stake, thence North 7.28 chains to a pine by a ditch, thence northwest ward by said ditch 8.28 chains to a Bay tree on Long Branch, thence north 26° each 21.35 chains to a sweet gum, thence northward with the aid of a field 2.53 chains to a Lane, thence northwestwardly along Lane 11.50 chains more or less to a stake to the north of a branch of fences, North 19° Southeast 17.50 chains to a pine at a ditch thence southwardly...

This passage gives information that remains correct in 2003, as many of these features are still observable on the site. [Figure 8]

The farm peaks economically between 1895 and 1915 with truck farming agriculture heralding the “lettuce boom” in New Hanover County. Shipping produce by rail to Northern markets added to the family’s prosperity. Both of the houses on site remained occupied, one by the owners and one by laborers. Multiple outbuildings comprised the farm system, contributing to the processing of the products for family use. In addition, a survey of the property denotes the lines and establishes its boundaries. The Martindale Farm represents an active participant in the local agricultural community during this period.

⁵⁴ Jordan and Rowntree, *The Human Mosaic*, 106.

⁵⁵ Stilgoe, *Common Landscapes of America*, 100. “Gunter’s Chain” developed by English surveyor, Edmund Gunter is 100 links of chain equaling 66 feet, 10 chains make up an acre and a square mile of land contains 640 acres.

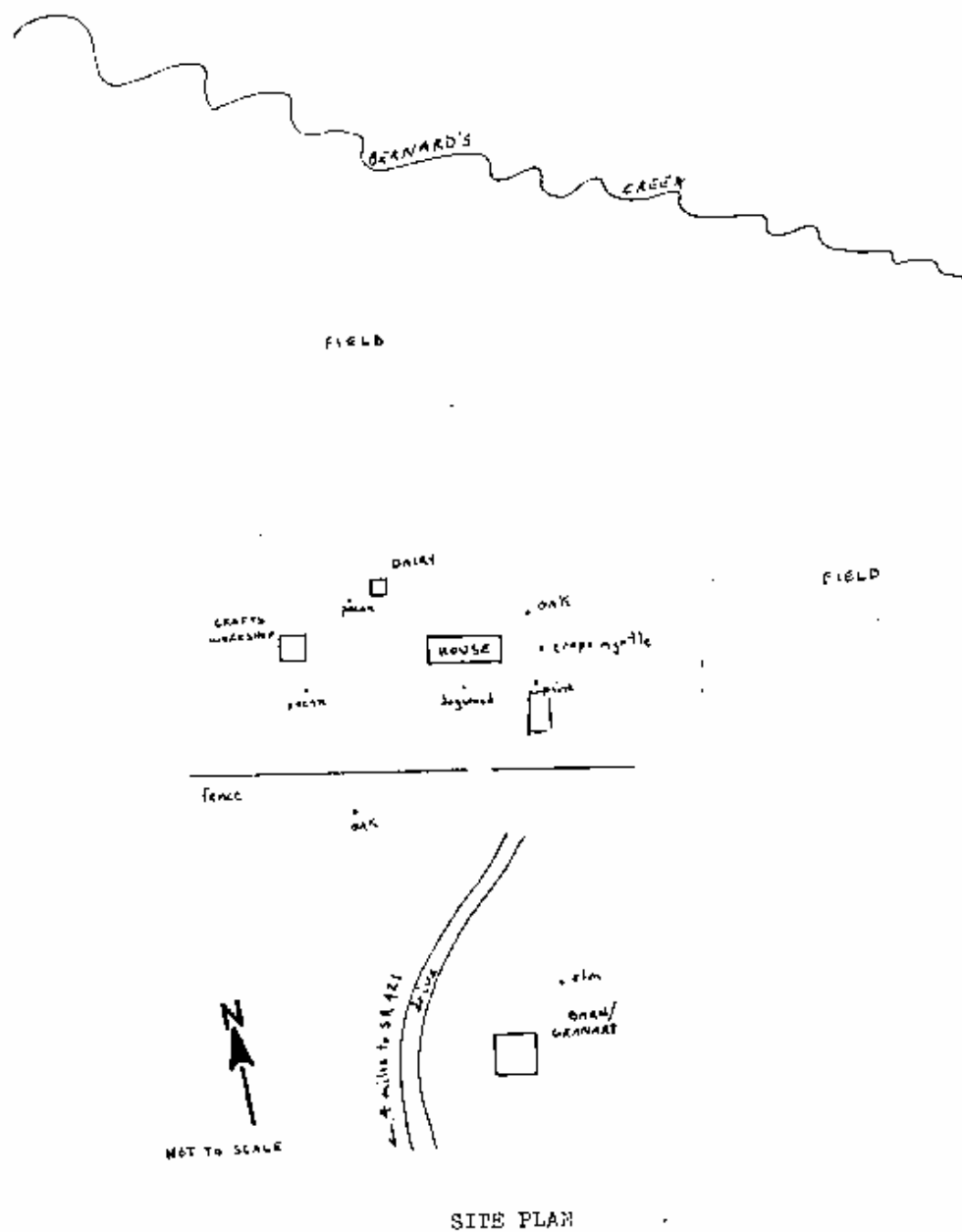


Figure 8. Martindale Farm Site Plan

Twentieth Century (1911-1969) - Women Only

Henry Alexander Martindale died in 1911, leaving the entire property to his eldest daughter, Rebecca Martindale Johnson (1870-1948). Widowed at an early age, she had returned to her father's farm in 1897 bringing along her infant daughter, Harriett Hunter Johnson (1895- 2001). Catherine Martindale Casteen's orphaned daughter, Catherine Casteen (1906-1984), lived there as well. With Martindale's wife Sidney, and his daughter, Catherine Casteen (1877-1906) preceding him in death, and his son Owen Martindale (1873-1964) established on his own successful truck farm, Rebecca became the only choice to take control of the house and property. These three females, Rebecca aged 41, Harriett, 16 and young Catherine only 5 years old, now owned and operated the 363 acres that remained of the Martindale Farm.⁵⁶ It proved to be an economically difficult period for both the farm and the country with two World Wars and the Great Depression.

Farming demanded labor and the Martindale Farm stayed viable as long as the hired labor availability continued. The descendants of former slaves, Levi MacDonald for one, plowed and worked the soil. The women also counted on help to maintain the house and the buildings. Renting out parcels of land barely covered expenses, so the women sold parcels of the land to decrease property tax assessments over the years. During this period, the women turned to extractive farming methods as an alternative to the traditional for survival purposes. Selling timber tops (but never the whole trees to pulp mills) aided in paying for taxes as well as putting a new roof on the house. Tin sheeting

⁵⁶ Will of Henry Alexander Martindale, New Hanover County Records, (Wilmington, North Carolina, 1911), J, 131.

replaced the old cypress shingles on the main house. The main house enters a period of “preservation by neglect” due to difficult economics.⁵⁷

The Fergus House, former slave quarters turned tenant house, now held accessories for Rebecca Johnson’s horse and buggy. This conversion to storage facility, confirmed by excavated artifacts of reign and bridle bits, became the final function of this structure.⁵⁸ [Figure 9] Oral histories with Miss Harriett Johnson support this as well. By the time Rebecca died in 1948, automobiles had long replaced horse and buggy travel, negating the necessity for a tack shed. This old cabin slowly deteriorated due to lack of maintenance, eventually collapsing and leaving living memory.

Upon Rebecca’s death, ownership of the farm passed to Harriett Johnson and her cousin, Catherine Casteen. Growing bulb flowers like gladiolas replaced vegetable cultivation. Selling potted plants necessitated the transformation of the former kitchen area into a potting shed. These two women also sold the rare flora of Venus Fly Traps and Pitcher plants in terrariums. Though quite lucrative, this effort panned out when their supply dwindled. In the mid-1960s, the cousins built a brick ranch house on a part of adjacent property. The site for this house rests on top of the foundation of a neighbor’s slave quarters already removed.⁵⁹ Living within walking distance allowed them to manage the grape crops and give tours of the old Martindale house. Aging and physically unable to work the farm or keep it up, the women decided to sell the main house to “the

⁵⁷ By not having the money to make any changes (i.e. modernize), the house retained its 19th-century integrity.

⁵⁸ <http://people.uncwil.edu/basedown/mm/html>

⁵⁹ Johnson interview, 6 June 2000.



Figure 9. Excavated Iron-Tack Accessories (Wilmington 2001)

right person.”⁶⁰ Miss Johnson, repository of the family history, found it difficult to let go of the property she held with dutiful obligation. This is one reason the house stands today, as it remained under her watchful eye until her death in 2001 at 105 years of age. While only women owned the Martindale farm, it began an economic decline that led to physical atrophy of the structures. One house totally collapses with disrepair while another maintains its original vernacular structure with this inadvertent neglect. The acreage, parceled off and sold, dwindled leaving only a quarter of the farm’s property intact.

Modern Times (1969-2002) – The McGinnis Family

Mr. J.P. McGinnis (b.1918) and wife Geraldine (b.1921) came often to the Martindale Farm to pick grapes for their family. Their acquaintance with Harriett, along with wanting a quiet place in the country, led them to buy the house and less than 20 acres in 1969. Harriett and Catherine, living in the house on an adjacent lot, became neighbors to their former clients. This sale altered the access to the old Martindale House, as no entry existed from Carolina Beach Road directly to the property. An easement giving rights to the McGinnis family to make a dirt road, Bell Meade Woods Road, further sectioned the land. Now both sites are reachable without the residents passing through the other’s front yard.

The Martindale house entered contemporary times under the McGinnis’s care. The interior changed more than the outside during the 1970s. First, the house had never had indoor plumbing or electricity before them, so this became a necessary change for the family to live comfortably. The old coquina plastering gave way to modern sheet rock. The front door was widened to current standards. A full kitchen built inside the house

⁶⁰ Ibid.

and a family room addition modernized the rear of the dwelling. The once detached sleeping shed became part of the structure as a master bedroom. Closet spaces were added upstairs.

The biggest change to the exterior occurred with nature's assistance. A storm in the late 1970s knocked down the chimney on the eastern end. [Figure 10] Not needing a chimney in the parlor, McGinnis reused these bricks to replace the wooden front porch. Therefore, the east side no longer has a chimney but retains the interior marks of a fireplace. The tin-sheet roofing also fell to wear, and asphalt shingling replaced it. The outside, painted a yellow color, protects the old wood siding. Despite these changes, as Turberg notes, "the house retains the character of a coastal farmhouse of the nineteenth century."⁶¹

As a farmstead, most of its agricultural purpose is gone from sight. With the installation of electricity, old outbuildings like the smoke house, no longer served a purpose and were torn down. Wood from the old barn forms the interior of a new storage building. The area of the old kitchen now holds a workshop for Mrs. McGinnis. The remaining milk shed no longer resides in its original position but out in the woods. What were once planting fields are now horse pastures. Even the colonial era grape vines are gone. Parcels of property deeded out to relatives, all with houses, enfold on two sides.

The chimneystack of the Fergus House -- slave cabin, tenant dwelling then tack shop -- stands as a reminder of the property's history. Though barely exposed prior to excavation, oral histories provoked academic inquiry regarding its nature. Now satisfied with the chronological progression via artifact assemblages, the next step of restoration for protection occurred. By re-mortaring the bricks to stabilize the stack and placing

⁶¹ *Historic Architecture of New Hanover County*, 132.



Figure 10. Martindale-McGinnis House – Wilmington, North Carolina Circa 1969

gravel around the exterior to deter plant growth, this remnant serves as a visible reminder to a building far from living memory. Hopefully, anyone coming upon this structure would notice its significance and not tear it down.

Part of the selection criteria for certification to the National Register of Historic Places study list is the *potential* the site holds for further study. Since the one-semester excavation did not examine the entire house site, a larger project is recommended to retrieve additional data. The first excavation focused on the midden fields in the ditch near the house and the slave cabin area. Other areas such as the cisterns and privy areas could provide even more information regarding farm life. Because these features required filling upon moving to another section, they become places for the family to dispose of unwanted goods. Since indoor plumbing was not installed until 1969, approximately 150 years of privy use could provide "...data on diet, socioeconomic status, division between households, construction methods and maintenance behavior." Not too many have been excavated in the state of North Carolina.⁶² Oral histories tell of a slave cemetery on the grounds. The potential find of this and other features via archaeology would add important dimensions to the farm and community's history.

The history of the Martindale Farm retreats to a time out of living memory except for the very few still around that remember when cultivating crops provided a decent livelihood. Preservationist Michael Tomlan states, "For us in the 20th century, so close and interdependent...it may be difficult to imagine a time in the last century that almost

⁶²Kathleen Wheeler, "View from the Outhouse: What We Can Learn from the Excavation of Privies," Linda Stine, Martha Zierdan, et al, *Carolina's Historical Landscapes*, (Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1997), 1-2.

everybody was connected with directly or indirectly with the land.”⁶³ Soon with the advancing urban sprawl, this farm will no longer represent this connection either and its voice will be lost forever. What we know about the house and property is just the beginning of this farm’s interrelations to the agricultural community and to the city itself. It also meets the preservation criteria as a representative of vernacular architecture. A sampling of other farms and farmers compared to the Martindale Farm puts them in context with coastal farming. Their contribution to the broader history of the community is open for further examination.

⁶³ Michael A. Tomlan, *Farmsteads, Markets and Towns*, (Albany, New York, Preservation League of New York State, 1982), 42.

CHAPTER TWO: THE PATRIARCHAL FARM- EMERGENCE OF THE MARTINDALES

Practically every crop grown and harvested in the various States of the Union maybe successfully cultivated, and with profit upon the Coastal plains of Eastern North Carolina. Wilmington, North Carolina, 1916.¹

The Martindale Farm of Wilmington, North Carolina, under the ownership of a single family for 150 years, corresponds to common farming practices in local agricultural history. Beginning with the arrival of English settlers to the area in the late 1600s until the present day, the cultivators of lands in New Hanover County created a community separate from the urban area of Wilmington. These hinterland farmers supplied the city markets with a fresh food source thus establishing early economic links. Living in close proximity to the port provided a vehicle for exportation of moneymaking crops as well. With the purchase of property in 1823, the Martindale family began participating in these local agricultural endeavors. What began with yeoman Henry Martindale building a successful farm with corn and cattle transferred to his son to carry on. Under the guidance of Henry Alexander Martindale, the farm entered into the burgeoning business of truck farming to northern markets. From 1824 until 1911, the Martindale Farm represents profitable adaptations to a changing agricultural economy over two generations sustained by male associational bonds, kinship networks and white supremacy. The examination of the Martindales' processes of cultivation and marketing choices exposes a portion of this region's agricultural history.

The location of the property plays an important role in any agricultural scenario. New Hanover County is situation in the coastal plain of North Carolina. This fertile region reaches from the Atlantic Ocean to approximately 100-150 miles inland. It holds the

¹ Allen Maull, *Eastern North Carolina for the Farmer*, (Wilmington, North Carolina, 1916), 2.

richest potential agricultural area of the state.² Its flat topography lends to easy plowing, while the drained, low-lying Carolina bays tender rich, dark soil. The geography of the County also offers access to the ocean by way of the Cape Fear River, allowing for water transportation, thus making this region particularly desirable to farming. With the establishment of Wilmington as a colonial port, the hinterlands made use of the city services by exporting goods along the waterways. In this way, the urban population also took advantage of fresh foods supplied to their market. At least ninety-five percent of North Carolina's early settlers farmed due to this demand for provisions.³ From early on the coastal farmers in New Hanover County had benefit of fertile soil, water transportation and a nearby city market to distribute their products, overall a good place to begin farming.

Not all agricultural cultivation is equal on an economic scale. The value of certain crops is greater due to the demands of the current market trends. Consequently, farmers in a community tend to grow the same items. The growing of money or cash crops, the profit makers for the farmers with the highest market yields, enticed farmers to conservatively stay with an old staple. For the New Hanover County area, the security found in the early crops of rice, wheat, corn and tobacco supported the farmer's monetary needs with shipment out of the area.

The yeoman farmers composed the largest social class in colonial North Carolina. These independent, small, non-slave holding farmers numbered "60 to 65 percent of the

² G.W. Forster, *Cropper Farming in the Coastal Plain*, (Raleigh, North Carolina State University, The Agricultural Experiment Station, September 1942), 5.

³ Hugh Talmage Lefler and Albert Ray Newsome, *The History of a Southern State, North Carolina*, 3rd edition, (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 89.

total white population.”⁴ The middle class farmer, holding less than twenty slaves made up the next largest group with 20 to 25 percent.⁵ So approximately 80 to 85 percent of the total population held ties to the land via agriculture. A sense of self-sufficiency then developed, especially in the yeoman class, to take care of their families by raising most of what they ate. Therefore, along with the money crops, farmers like the Martindales cultivated a home garden specifically for consumption by the family. Selling the surplus of seasonal crops at the local public markets supplemented their income. Livestock such as hogs, chickens, cows and all their by-products also became part of the family’s economic resources. What the family could not use they sold or traded to the open community to supply the non-agrarian population. This type of self-sufficient farming speaks of technical management of the land by cultivation practices honed through years of experience. According to John Stilgoe, cultural geographer, “...a farmer farmed the land, he worked it, he made it pay, he mastered it.”⁶ Henry Martindale and later his son, Henry Alexander, represents the personification of this statement.

Colonial- Pre-history of Belmeade

The early records of the Martindale property formerly called *Belmeade* denote little agricultural activity. However, the overall history of the area suggests that first stage of cultivation was timbering. Settlers coming into New Hanover County in the early 1700s developed economic ties to the Naval stores industries revolving around tar, pitch and turpentine extracted for the native pine trees. These products comprised the majority of

⁴ Ibid., 421.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ John R. Stilgoe, *Common Landscapes of America, 1580-1845*, (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1982), 137-138.

goods exported from the colonial port of Wilmington.⁷ Early farmers first cleared their future fields of trees in order to cultivate. To generate income while doing this, the farmer sold the timber to local naval store brokers. Timber was valuable not only to commercial interest but also to residents in a time when wood provided the majority of heating and cooking fuel. Following the colonial period, farming and timbering continued to go hand-in-hand, with a successful farmer clearing land in the winter, farming in the spring and summer, and fishing during the fall.⁸ It is likely that the colonial owners of *Belmeade* adapted this scenario, removing the trees and working with the naval stores.

Markets developed in Wilmington for the exchange of goods by the hinterland farmers to the urban population. Colonists brought this tradition from their native countries as public markets houses existed in England and Scotland.⁹ The 1739 incorporation charter for the City of Wilmington allowed construction of a market house after garnering funds via taxes.¹⁰ The Town Committee maintained strict regulations to ensure the appropriate selling of goods for health purposes as well as controlling hours of operations.¹¹ Colonial business activities concentrated along Market, Dock, and Front Streets. A respected state

⁷ Alan D. Watson, *Wilmington, Port of North Carolina*, (Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1992), 12.

⁸ Jack H. Lea III, interview with author, tape and notes, 25 July 2002. Mr. Lea is a descendant of a local colonial farmer.

⁹ Brian Joe Lobley Berry, *Geography of Market Centers and Retail Distribution*, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1967), 15.

¹⁰ Lawrence Lee, *The Lower Cape Fear in Colonial Days*, (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1965), 125.

¹¹ Donald R. Lennon and Ida Brooks Kellam, editors, *The Wilmington Town Book, 1743-1778*, (Raleigh, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1977), 20.

historian, Alan Watson, affirms it was “the most active center of commerce in North Carolina before the Revolutionary War.”¹² Local farmers contributed to this activity.

The location of the colonial city markets placed emphasis on water transportation routes. The original public market on Front and Market Streets occupied the lower level of the colonial courthouse in 1733. A public wharf, constructed on Dock Street in 1749 became a popular site to sell products directly from boats. Once the city incorporated, the charter provided for the construction of a formalized market structure. In 1752, the new public building dedicated to marketing was located on Market Street but closer to the Cape Fear River to allow easy access by water.¹³ Around the same time, a second public venue opened at the intersection of Second and Market Streets known as the “Mud Market.”¹⁴ Located at the junction of two natural streams it served farmers and fishermen alike, who brought their goods by way of shallow water boats directly up the current to the market.¹⁵ Along with the export of money crops by way of the port, the city supported farmers economically by the construction of these markets.

During the colonial period of New Hanover County, the historical record slants towards the progress of the port city rather than the workings of agricultural endeavors. The development of a central business district in Wilmington sets the stage for an exchange of local farm-produced goods to the general public. This allowed the farmer either supplemental income or commodities of trade from the surplus of their enterprise.

¹² Alan D. Watson, *Society in Colonial North Carolina*, (Raleigh, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, 1975), 79.

¹³ Lennon and Kellam, *The Wilmington Town Book*, xxxii.

¹⁴ Lewis Philip Hall, *Land of the Golden River, Historical Events and Stories of Southeastern North Carolina and the Lower Cape Fear*, (Wilmington, North Carolina, 1975), 175.

¹⁵ Lennon and Kellam, *The Wilmington Town Book*, 92.

Little is known about the cultivated products specific to *Belmeade* as the local market infrastructure pre-dates the earliest occupants.

Federal period to the Civil War - Henry Martindale

As the Martindale family enters the record as property owner, more information is available regarding the activities of a farm in New Hanover County. The Martindale family is representative of a typical Southern yeoman farmer, not a plantation owner. The common use of the term *farmer* emerged by 1820 from the colonial words, “husbandman, cultivator and agriculturalist,” meaning a person who toils the soil himself, not the managerial position denoted by the term *planter*.¹⁶ Henry Martindale’s success as a farmer becomes apparent by the up-grade in dwelling construction along with acreage and slave acquisitions. He develops a niche within the economy of the city of Wilmington by selling his produce there. Martindale’s emergence into the community of hinterland farmers begins a family commitment to the land.

Available documentation does not explain why Henry Martindale (1796-1874) came to New Hanover County from Onslow County as a young man. However, the opportunity for farming in this area possibly pulled him towards this direction. Having purchased the former *Belmeade* property in 1823, he began construction of a simple but permanent structure as his residence. The pre-existing dwelling (Fergus House) built approximately 80 years earlier, served as temporary housing in the early years. The new house was built for his 13-year old bride, Rebecca Sellers of Smithville (Southport), North Carolina, by utilizing materials from the property. With the 160 acres of land in his patent, he began farming.

¹⁶ Stilgoe, *Common Landscapes*, 137.

Among other things, Martindale raised cattle during the Federal period. North Carolina historians Hugh Lefler and Albert Newsome suggest these scrub cattle had “a lean and hungry look due to roaming freely in the woods.”¹⁷ These cattle, forced to swim across the waters at Masonboro Sound, lived on one of the barrier islands during the late fall and winter months. This frontier method cut down on feed costs as the cattle foraged for themselves until the spring harvesting of grains.¹⁸ Martindale placed a fence along the 12 acres of his land used to channel the cattle to the sound (near today’s Friendly Lane, off Masonboro Loop Road) without treading on anyone else’s property. Having this strip of land from his farm to the sound became a vital link for access to these islands for his cattle herd.

Grain crops such as rice, wheat and corn made-up the bulk of agriculture products cultivated by Martindale. Rice fields near the Masonboro Sound area produced a “highland type” which did not require long periods of flooding to grow.¹⁹ Farmers in the Masonboro area also raised wheat primarily for export out of the area via the Wilmington port.²⁰ Corn, the largest commodity produced on the farm, supplied both human and animal consumptions justifying its title as “the most useful grain in the world.”²¹ With the Martindale family, the on site granary held the corn until ready for shucking and milling. The waste products fed the livestock. Miss Harriett Johnson, the last relative living on the property, recalled an old stone mill on the farm for the grinding of corn.²² This mill either fell into disrepair or could not keep up with the quantity produced by the

¹⁷ Lefler and Newsome, *The History of a Southern State, North Carolina*, 95.

¹⁸ Rupert B. Vance, *Human Geography of the South, a Study in Regional Resources and Human Adequacy*, (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1932), 148.

¹⁹ Harriett Hunter Johnson, interview with author, tapes and notes, 17 July 2000.

²⁰ Lefler and Newsome, *The History of a Southern State*, 316.

²¹ *North Carolina Century Farms, 100 Years of Continuous Agriculture Heritage*, (Raleigh, North Carolina, Department of Agriculture, 1989), 12.

²² Johnson interview, 23 March 2000.

farm. A community mill, Greenfield, located near the city ground most of the corn for the hinterland farmers. A portion of the product served as payment for the service.²³ Though not considered “cash crops,” these grain commodities provided income for the Martindale farm.

The Southern agricultural moneymakers or “cash crops” of tobacco and cotton contributed only slightly to the Martindale farm. Generally, tobacco requires a different soil than that found in coastal New Hanover County. No records exist of any attempt by the Martindales or other farmers in the Masonboro Community to cultivate this product. However, neighbors of the Martindales, the Craig and Trask families, raised cotton in the antebellum period.²⁴ So assuming Henry Martindale followed the lead of the surrounding farms, he probably raised a small amount of cotton as well.

As a yeoman farmer, Martindale did not bring any slaves to the property when he purchased it. Just starting in this area with out benefit of a family legacy or large capital placed limitations on utilizing this available labor source. The rate of a “prime field hand” ranged between \$300 and \$800 dollars by 1840 due to the Congressional act closing the foreign slave trade.²⁵ This made the primary investment of purchasing a slave out of reach in the beginning. After a few years, as the farm began to prosper, Martindale acquired slaves as he acquired additional acreage. By 1845, he accumulated a total of 435 acres, more than doubling his initial purchase.²⁶ It became cost effective to have the slaves as extra hands on this size farm, as it became more than a one-man operation. He

²³ James Colvin, interview with author, tape and notes, 25 June 2002.

²⁴ C. Heide Trask, Jr., interview with author, tape and notes, 3 September 2002.

²⁵ Lefler and Newsome, *The History of a Southern State, North Carolina*, 424.

²⁶ New Hanover County Tax Records, 1845.

owned between two to five slaves before their emancipation in 1865.²⁷ This increased his social status to a middle-class, small slave-holding farmer.

The difference between a planter and middle class farmer involved economics. The planter, with a multiple slave system including overseers, never worked in the fields. He managed the plantation like a business. The yeoman worked the farm himself with the assistance of family members only. The small farm owner, with a few slaves, continued actively cultivating the fields while working along side a slave.²⁸ This minimized costs of providing shelter, food and clothing by keeping slave numbers down. On the Martindale farm, these slaves resided in the Fergus house, located near the main house. The slaves freed Martindale from continuous agricultural involvement allowing for trips into town to sell products. The purchasing of slaves entered Martindale into a higher rank among farmers but financial limitations kept this number in check.

The antebellum period marked a visible measure of success for Henry Martindale. His humble beginnings as a yeoman farmer transformed into a small farm, slave-owner. The grain commodities, the cattle, and the small quantities of cotton he cultivated created a positive agricultural environment. His economic success, measured in additional land and slave purchases, also necessitated enlarging his residence. His growing family of wife and two children, Henry Alexander and Agnes Bellamy, outgrew the house he constructed in the 1820s. Even with this outward success, he still maintained ties to the city by selling at the local markets.

With the growing agricultural community, the number of available markets for products exchange in Wilmington increased too. As the population of the city increased,

²⁷ New Hanover County Tax Abstracts 1825 and 1845.

²⁸ Lefler and Newsome, *The History of a Southern State, North Carolina*, 425-427.

a new town market replaced the earlier one at the foot of Market Street in 1847. Built by Benjamin Gardener it ran the length of the street from the water to Front Street (187 feet) and 25 feet wide.²⁹ It housed ten stalls for the selling of fruits, vegetables and meats, all regulated by the Town Commission. A female newcomer to town wrote in 1861, “the market is good here but everything is quite high.”³⁰ This may not tell the complete story as there stood other options to the public market house.

Not everyone wanted to sell from the market. The retail spaces, rented out by the city, went to a select few with both the time and money to be there during entire market time. An alternative became the practice of vending from a cart, usually pulled by an ox. These peddlers or “hucksters” set-up for the day in close proximity to the main market site with their smaller quantities of goods. After an appointed time the city allowed them to move through the residential areas to bring the products directly to the people. The City defined a “huckster” as “a person who sells from cart/wagon any item which was not raised, gathered, produced upon land owned, leased, or rented by the person offering for sale by said person.”³¹ For farmers with little time to spend selling at a market, this third party involvement solved the problem by someone else selling goods for them.

The colonial Dock Street public wharf site developed into a “second market” by the mid 1800s.³² The 26-foot wide dock came up from the Cape Fear River almost all the way to Front Street.³³ Therefore, the Dock Street wharf area became the place to sell via the water. At the foot of this street, tied to the wharf, Martindale sold his foodstuffs from

²⁹ Hall, *Land of the Golden River*, 175.

³⁰ Cornelius M. Dickson Thomas, *Letters from the Colonel's Lady, 1861*, (Wilmington, North Carolina, Whitehead Printing Company, 1965), 33.

³¹ Wilmington City Ordinances, Wilmington, North Carolina, 1922, 180.

³² Lee, *The Lower Cape Fear*, 101.

³³ Lennon and Kellam, *The Wilmington Town Book*, xxxii.

his boat.³⁴ These large flat bottom boats, launched into the Cape Fear River from an access point near Silver Lake, brimmed with fruits and vegetables not only from his farm but from neighboring farms as well. By using poles, these boats made it to town going against the flow of the river, taking up to two to three times as long as it would by road travel.³⁵ This extra time became justified with the amount of products brought into town on a single journey. The goods sold directly from the boat requiring no extra time to unload. Selling at the Dock Street wharf establishes the Martindale's economic ties to the city prior to the Civil War.

The farm under the ownership of Henry Martindale prevailed in agriculture during the antebellum period. Raising cattle, growing grain, dabbling in cotton all contributed to the success of the farm. This prosperity shows with the construction of and addition to a newer house along with the acquisition of more acreage. Entering into the traditional Southern system of farm labor, he purchased enough slaves to help him run his enterprise. Their self-sufficiency in food cultivation supplemented family income with the selling of surplus at local markets. This bond continued into the 20th Century. Though not the plantation lifestyle romanticized in modern literature and movies, the Martindale farm exemplified New Hanover County agricultural trends of the period.

Late 19TH – early 20TH Century – Henry Alexander Martindale

By the close of the Civil War, Henry Martindale and son, Henry Alexander Martindale (1837-1911) farmed the property together. Agricultural philosophy and methods passed from generation to generation, from father to son in this way. Changes to these traditions under Reconstruction South required a break from what each had previously experienced.

³⁴ Johnson interview, 23 March 2000.

³⁵ Watson, *Wilmington, Port of North Carolina*, 15.

Looking to guidance from other males in the community resulted in crop selection modifications, allowing early entry into truck farming, a profitable period of cultivation in New Hanover County.

The period after the Civil War made profound changes in farming in the South. The battles took their tolls on the land and the men. Many farms, some abandoned during the war, fell off in production. Both of the Martindale men served in the war as C.S.A. home guards stationed at Fort Fisher.³⁶ The women and children, along with remaining slaves continued with minimal cultivation when at the farm. For the most part the family left, spending time huddled with other families in the area at nearby farms for protection.³⁷ Upon the men's return, the process of farming began again but with a different plan of business.

The Martindale Farm, too big for only father and son to manage alone, required adjustment in labor relations. In general, African-Americans, with few skills other than farming, lacked the capital to begin farming on their own. This began the "evolution of the sharecropper system" with many blacks returning to labor on the same farms they once worked as slaves.³⁸ This brought people into the neglected lands left fallow with the damages of war and diminishing plantation system.³⁹ On the Martindale Farm this meant the returning slaves, now tenants, lived in the same quarters but received a portion of the farm's profits in exchange for their labor. The Martindale men retained their patriarchal

³⁶ Crockette W. Hewlett and Mona Smalley, *Between the Creeks, Revised, Masonboro Sound, 1735-1985*, (Wilmington, North Carolina, New Hanover Printing & Publishing Company, 1985), 40.

³⁷ Johnson interview, 23 March 2000.

³⁸ Lefler and Newsome, *The History of a Southern State, North Carolina*, 522.

³⁹ Herman Clarence Nixon, "Wither Southern Economy," *I'll Take My Stand: the South and the Agrarian Tradition by Twelve Southerners*, (New York, Harper, 1962), 191.

status. The close working relationship with these former slaves continued into the 20th Century.

The formation of agricultural organizations also aided the southern farmer through the transitions of Reconstruction. After the war, problems arose with transportation inadequacies, high freight costs and taxes, making recovery even more difficult.⁴⁰ The banding together of men in the same situation brought about the creation of organizations across the region. The Cape Fear Agricultural Society, chartered in 1868, began with “a mission of improving commerce, mechanics and agriculture of Eastern North Carolina.”⁴¹ This group distributed literature to farmers regarding market values as well as advising on technological advances. In 1869, the Cape Fear Agricultural Association Exhibit held a successful public fair to educate local farmers and raise awareness for citizens alike.⁴² A weekly supplemental circular accompanied the regular *Wilmington Star News* titled *Carolina Farmer* also provided supporting news for Southeastern North Carolina farmers. Both the group and the periodical suggest that the New Hanover County agricultural community formed tight bonds.

In 1874 with the death of Henry Martindale, the farm passed into the hands of Henry Alexander and his family. His wife, the former Sidney Anne Horne (1841-1900), the daughter of a neighboring farmer, solidified his ties to the Masonboro community. This important connection kept him following the marketing trends of the day. His three surviving children, Rebecca, Owen and Catherine completed this farm family. The first-born child, Benjamin (1867-1868), died in infancy.

⁴⁰ Lefler and Newsome, *The History of a Southern State, North Carolina*, 520.

⁴¹ *Carolina Farmer and Morning Star*, (Wilmington, North Carolina), 20 January 1871.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 05 September 1869.

Henry Alexander Martindale (H.A.) took control of the farm during a depressed agricultural period. Crop choices became a new focus in the late 1800s. Before the Civil War farmers stayed with their traditional moneymaking crops, cotton, tobacco, grains, etc. But after the War, with the new expense of hiring labor, or splitting profits along with declining prices in previously stable markets, the old way appeared to hold farmers in “an economic straight jacket.”⁴³ All these factors led to a search for another profitable crop. H.A.’s brother-in-law, Daniel Webster (Web) Trask, “always reading farm magazines” and “thinking of the latest ways to grow vegetables,” experimented with a crop not previously cultivated in this region.⁴⁴ With the development of large commodity markets specifically for the national distribution of fruits and vegetables such as the New York Produce Exchange (1862), produce type agriculture flourished.⁴⁵ Lettuce, a product familiar to farmers in the northern regions of the United States but not in the South, became the new money crop leading to a peak period of agricultural profitability in the New Hanover County area.

Several factors placed the Southern farmers in a favorable position to compete with northern vegetable growers. The first factor was simply the longer growing season in the southern sections. In New Hanover County there is almost ten months of growing potential, with 210-300 days between the spring and fall frosts.⁴⁶ The ground in this region is similar in fertility all along the Atlantic Seaboard with “soil and climate of the coastal strips suited to give growing fruits and vegetables with what they need most,

⁴³ Charles Reagan Wilson and William Ferris, editors, *The Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 6.

⁴⁴ Frederick Graham Trask, *The Carolina Trasks, an Informal History*, (Columbia, South Carolina, The R.L. Bryan Company, 1981), 31.

⁴⁵ John T. Schlebecker, *A History of American Farming, 1607-1972*, (Ames, Iowa, The Iowa State University Press, 1975), 169.

⁴⁶ *The Economic Alternative of Producing and Marketing Fruits and Vegetables in the Coastal Plains Regions of Georgia and the Carolinas, Vol. I*, (The Coast Plains Commission), January 1975, 9.

water and sunshine.’⁴⁷ The geographic scenario allowed for cultivation of moneymaking crops in the south with a potential for a greater yield along with a longer growing season. In addition, by planting crops earlier, the southern product arrived sooner at market, thereby generating top dollar.

The development of the rail lines in the city assisted in the rise of the area’s agricultural diversity. By 1840, the Wilmington and Weldon (Raleigh) connected the port city to the central portion of the state. Following the Civil War, track gauge standards on tracks permitted the southern lines to link with northern bound routes. By the late 1880s Wilmington had become a major rail center and break-of-bulk point for shipping.⁴⁸ Within a few years of 1890, North Carolina State legislation, at the urging of local agricultural organizations, ensured regulations of freight rates.⁴⁹ This allowed for cheaper shipment of agricultural goods. The addition of the railroad available to New Hanover County farmers created a positive environment for entering into northern markets.

Workforce issues became another positive point for the south to engage in competition with northern farmers. The newly freed slaves with little skills other than farming created a cheap labor pool. Dr. Oemler, a Georgian planter suggested, “the death of slavery was, so to speak, the birth of truck farming on an extensive scale in the South Atlantic and Gulf State.” He continues by adding, “It would have been impossible” given the previous situation, referring back to slavery.⁵⁰ Cultivation of seasonal vegetable

⁴⁷ Vance, *Human Geography of the South*, 227.

⁴⁸ Duncan P. Randall, “Wilmington, North Carolina: The Historical Development of a Port City,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 58, No. 3, 446.

⁴⁹ Lefler and Newsome, *The History of a Southern State, North Carolina*, 546-547.

⁵⁰ A. Oemler, *Truck Farming at the South, a Guide to the raising of Vegetables for Northern Markets*, (New York, Orange Judd, 1884), 181.

crops requires a fluctuation in labor requirements. More people work during the planting and harvesting than the actual growing period. If the farmer had to provide (shelter, food, clothing, etc.) year round for the handful or hundreds of laborers needed for a short finite period, the labor costs outweighed the potential profits. A seasonal worker, paid only when needed, received five cents per basket picked at peak production periods. A few workers on large farms became supervisors, working the entire year for salaries ranging from \$10.75 to \$12.00 per month in the 1880s.⁵¹ The inexpensive help available in the New Hanover County area aided the foray into truck farming enterprises.

With the right geography, access to transportation and a source of cheap help, the South, along with New Hanover County, stood ready for agricultural competition with the North. Truck farming, the cultivation of vegetables and fruits for the sole purpose of shipping out of the area, did not mandate a major capital investment of extra equipment. Most farmers grew their own household vegetables all along; truck farming began simply by delegating additional land for this specific purpose.

Knowing all of the factors of this area contributed to one local man's lead in the truck farming business. As a poor part-time farmer, Web Trask, also fished and boxed trees for turpentine to make ends meet. With nowhere else to go but up he risked planting an experimental crop of lettuce in the 1880s.⁵² The quality and quantity of the produce improved year after year until 1890 when he "grew more lettuce than the local market could take and he had to ship it or lose it in the field."⁵³ This prompted him to find a market house in the north willing to take his crop. Having telegraphed a number of produce brokers in the large northern cities, one in Philadelphia responded with

⁵¹ Ibid., 8.

⁵² Trask, *The Carolina Trasks*, 26-27.

⁵³ Ibid., 31.

acceptance, if he could get it up there without spoilage.⁵⁴ When a telegram arrived later stating the produce arrived at market and to “Send-More,” the risk paid off, and the probability of prosperity with vegetables became a reality. As Web Trask stated, “That’s how we started getting that Yankee money and bringing it back to the South after the Civil War.”⁵⁵ Being in a close-knit community of farmers, he shared what he knew with others including his brother-in-law, H.A. Martindale.

Riding the coattails of a male relative, Martindale entered into the truck farming business. He planted his first crop of lettuce in 1892 after learning from Web Trask’s experiences. Planting began in January with seedbeds, which required protection from the frost by covering with cloth. Martindale secured credit with a local store in order to get enough cheesecloth or homespun for that first season.⁵⁶ Other crops of beans, cucumbers, potatoes, radishes, tomatoes, squash, sweet potatoes, etc. added diversity to the shipments. However, the new cash crop became lettuce. The harvesting and shipping started in late April through early May. Agents representing specific northern markets came into town to buy the crops prior to their shipment. Labels provided by these agents insured delivery of the produce to a particular market in cities such as Baltimore, Philadelphia, Wilmington (Delaware), New York City, Newark and as far as Boston.⁵⁷ With a place established for selling the goods the crop’s timely delivery became important to obtain the top dollar. The business of truck farming required more planning of product harvesting to coordinate delivery to the out-of-state-markets.

⁵⁴ C. Heide Trask, Jr., interview, 5 September 2002.

⁵⁵ Trask, *the Carolina Trasks*, 32.

⁵⁶ Johnson interview, 23 March 2000.

⁵⁷ Johnson interview, 6 June 2000.

Consequently, farmers like the Martindales paid careful attention to the packaging of the produce to reduce damage. County farmers had long honed methods of keeping their own foods from spoiling out of season. Banks dug into the earth and covered with burlap sacks, for example, kept sweet potatoes edible during the winter months.⁵⁸ Cooler temperatures maintained crispness in perishable items for longer periods. Trask successfully risked sending his first shipment in flour barrels cut in half then filled with expensive ice.⁵⁹ These evolved into wooden baskets and later into slatted crates to help keep cost down while protecting the product. Eventually refrigerated rail cars added to the process of shipping by minimizing damage by keeping temperatures constant.

The truck farming “boom” began to peak around 1900. A local historian, Dr. James Sprunt noted, “One of the most important of our industries is truck farming.”⁶⁰ For the Martindale family, the truck farming business brought a renewed prosperity. At the turn of the Century, H.A. and son Owen farmed together just as he did with his father before him, thereby securing a place for him in the local agricultural community. The patriarchal tradition of maintaining the farm continued under a man’s direction and business plan.

Local land development groups and business acknowledge the profitability of the truck farming business. Knowing that this region held large tracts of undeveloped land, they specifically advertised to bring new farmers into New Hanover County and surrounding areas. A successful, white businessman with connections to various civic organizations, Hugh MacRae, stands out as one of these promoters. He posted literature

⁵⁸ R.C. Fowler, interview with author, tape and notes, 7 July 2002.

⁵⁹ Trask interview, 5 September 2002.

⁶⁰ James Sprunt, *Chronicles of the Cape Fear River, 1660-1916, 2nd edition*, (Wilmington, Broadfoot Printing Company, 1992), 168.

and placed representatives in Italy, Holland, Poland and Ukraine in the early 1900s, all hailing the lands of southeastern North Carolina to be the best for farming. Most who came had little to no experience with agriculture but desired the chance to try. Selling the property to the immigrants once their farms got up and running stood as a primary motivation for MacRae.⁶¹ An underlying secondary issue may have been to prevent these undeveloped lands from going to native-born minorities as property owners.⁶² By settling areas such as St. Helena, Van Eeden and Castle Hayne with only white Europeans, MacRae assisted in keeping blacks from settling in his agricultural colonies thus excluding them economically from the truck farming community at large.

European immigrants were not the only ones brought into the area because of farming opportunities. People from other areas of the United States came also in answer to print advertisements by the Atlantic Coastline Railroad. The company published a brochure in 1916 touting the advantages of farming in the southeast as a way to promote business along their service corridors. “We want real farmers, or real men, who will make good farmers,” claimed the prefatory statement.⁶³ The pamphlet expounds on the success of truck farming in the region by listing the possibilities of various crops for shipment to northern markets. Hoping to increase freight invoices by encouraging new farmers into this area, transportation companies published the advantages of truck farming in New Hanover and surrounding counties.

⁶¹ Lawrence Lee, *New Hanover County...a brief history*, (Raleigh, North Carolina, Division of Archives and History, Department of Cultural Resources, 1977), 90.

⁶² Mary Lemione Michael, interview with author, tape and notes, 24 June 2002, Cornelius Swart and June Tilden, interview with author, tapes and notes, 3 July 2002. These are descendants of immigrants families brought in to the area by Hugh MacRae.

⁶³ Maull, *Eastern North Carolina for the Farmer*, 1.

With the arrival of new farmers to the local truck farming scene, a choice of marketing direction took place. Not everyone planted crops for northern destinations; some opted to deal only with the nearby markets. As one farmer noted, his family, “would haul their stuff to town and sell it,” by the wagon or cart, vending whatever was in season at the time.⁶⁴ Then others like the Martindales, while cultivating large fields of lettuce and other vegetables for delivery out of the area, grew specific crops for local marketing, such as watermelons. H.A., known locally as “the Watermelon King,” with his succulent fruits representing a point of pride in his agricultural abilities, brought his product to Wilmington weekly.⁶⁵ As a child, local historian James Sprunt recalls, “being filled with delight” watching for Martindale’s “white covered cart,” filled with watermelons and buttermilk to come into town “on a hot summer day.”⁶⁶ The melons, going for fifty cents each, supplemented the family’s income and maintained a long held niche with the local market.⁶⁷ Having built ties directly with grocery stores over the years, he did not rely on selling to the public but chose instead to trade with secondary vendors.

Some of these *green grocers*, fruit and vegetable sellers, were located in the new City Market. By 1880, the City of Wilmington constructed a new public market on Front Street. The old Town Market on Market Street, dating prior to the Civil War, became too small for the increasing demands of the bustling city and was torn down. The New City Market located on South Front Street near the Dock Street open-air market provided an indoor alternative. The original architecture of the building included 15,000 square feet of store space. Two main avenues divided the building permitting sixteen 13x15 foot

⁶⁴ James Colvin, interview with author, tape and notes, 25 June 2002.

⁶⁵ Johnson interview 23 March 2000.

⁶⁶ Sprunt, *Chronicles of the Cape Fear Region*, 169.

⁶⁷ Johnson interview, 23 March 2000. She gave the impression that fifty cents for a watermelon was a good price in the early 1900s.

stalls along the perimeters and twenty-five 8x15 foot smaller ones in the center. The selection of the site near an ample supply of water pumped from the river, allowed for cleaning the various stalls.⁶⁸ These sanitary conditions kept the market to better standards than the older one. With the back of the building accessing the Cape Fear River, vendors could deliver goods by either water or road. The side alleys served as exterior booths for the sale of fish and other seafood products. In addition, small vending carts lined the front of the market facing Front Street. Martindale had contact with any number of these retailers interested in purchasing or exchanging for fresh farm produce. These ties continued into the 20th Century with his daughter, Rebecca Martindale Johnson as the head of the farm.

Through two generations of a single family, a local farm in New Hanover County followed successful cultivation and marketing trends for almost ninety years. Living near the city of Wilmington, with multiple transportation modes for shipping goods out of the area, assisted in the economic prosperity of the farm. Economic ties to the city markets as a place of exchange for local farm goods developed as well. Over the lives of the male proprietors, the farm witnessed changes in crop selection and labor relationships. What began as a simple farm under the ownership of yeoman Henry Martindale developed into the independent business of truck farming under son Henry Alexander Martindale. The physical evidence of success shows with the additions to the farm structures, a new house and purchase of more acreage. Their life's achievements denote a National Register of Historic Places criterion as a "significant contribution to the broad patterns of our

⁶⁸ Tony P. Wrenn, *Wilmington, North Carolina: An Architectural and Historical Portrait*, (Charlottesville, University Press of Virginia), 1984, 45.

history.”⁶⁹ Sustained through a pattern of kinship networks, male organizations and white supremacy the Martindale men emerge into the historical record as examples of regional agriculturalists.

⁶⁹ National Register of Historic Places Fact Sheet 2, (Raleigh, State Historic Preservation Office, Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources).

CHAPTER THREE: AGRICULTURAL ALTERNATIVES- MARTINDALE FAMILY WOMEN

Within neighborhoods a striking difference in the productiveness of farms may be noted and this variation, when acre is matched against acre, cannot, in most cases, justly be attributed to the diversity of the soil, but rather to the effect of the methods by which the farming is conducted. Charles Dickerman 1869¹

Though the above statement reflects the transitional stage in Northern farming after the Civil War, it is applicable to the change in post World War I agriculture within New Hanover County. Beginning in the 1890s, truck farming flourished along the coastal South. For some in the region this business continued successfully into the 21st century, for others the 1920s began a steady decline in producing for commodity markets. The Martindale family comes into this latter scenario coincidentally under the management of only women. Beginning with Rebecca Johnson and later her daughter Harriett Johnson and niece Catherine Casteen, the roles of the women develop from pseudo-wife to property proprietress, survivalist and legacy holder until the farm passes out of the family's hands. Many external factors connected to widespread alterations in farming practices across the United States, along with regional and local events, contribute to the farm's down shifting. Due to gender constraints of the period, most choices are out of their control leading to alternative ventures. Single women, abandoned by all male supporters, with no access to organizations or credit, stepped vulnerably into a male-dominated line of work. Through their slow acceptance of any change, often hiding behind ideals left by their males, the farm moved from active participation in the agricultural community to an existence mode of living hand-to-mouth with their only real capital being the land passed down from the men.

¹ Clarence H. Danhof, *Change in Agriculture, the Northern United States, 1820-1870*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1969), 130.

In 1911, seventy-four year old Henry Alexander Martindale died. His entire estate transferred to surviving daughter, Rebecca Martindale Johnson (1870-1948) and granddaughters, Harriett Hunter Johnson and Catherine Casteen. This included two houses, several outbuildings, livestock, bonds and 363 acres of viable agricultural land successfully producing vegetable crops for northern markets. Having lived on this property as a child, Rebecca had returned home soon after her the death of her husband in 1897. Life on the farm offered opportunities for the young woman, the first being to care for her ailing mother, Sidney, until her death in 1900. While donning the mantle of pseudo-wife, learning the business of farming under her father and brother's guidance became another.

Assuming the role of the farm wife after her mother's death, thirty-year old Rebecca began farming. Miss Harriet Johnson remembers her mother, "didn't do much farming, she did some."² As was typical for the time, the wives and/or children tended to a small home garden for supplementing the family diet. In Rebecca's case, her father gave her a larger patch of land to raise her own beans and lettuce on. The returns for this section, sold along with the farm's shipments to the Northern markets, created her own income. This allowed for the purchase of a buggy, with awning and a horse. No longer would she ride to town in the produce cart but sit in style like a proper lady.³ This gave her some experience with cultivation while supported by her father, which permitted this luxurious purchase.

As a young woman learning her place in society as a farm wife, juggling both domestic and farm provisions fell to Rebecca. According to agricultural historian,

² Harriett Hunter Johnson, interview with author, tapes and notes, 23 May 2000.

³ Johnson interview, 20 March 2000.

LuAnn Jones, “a family’s well-being depended in large measure upon the thriftiness of women and the portions of household economy that custom assigned to them.”⁴ Besides the family’s personal needs, Rebecca kept formal accounting records for the farm. This role exposed her to the business end of a truck farm. Notations regarding the specific destination, transportation, arrival as well as payments went into a ledger. Miss Johnson recalled that her mother made “notes about these things” but she did not know what happened to the books.⁵ Rebecca probably acted as a liaison between the farm and the market agent. This gave her contacts with the necessary people in order to continue the business in the years immediately after her father’s death.

The farm remained *status quo* under Rebecca’s management for the first few years. On the national level, the country entered into a period of high agricultural production during World War I. Not only did market prices rise but also roads got better creating a cheaper alternative to using rail lines for shipping with trucks.⁶ The Martindale farm more-or-less ran itself during this time, requiring no new plan of action. Everything that Henry Alexander put into place stayed the same through the war years. No attempt to modify his business was necessary.

The early 1920s-1930s began a trend of shifting the vegetable and fruit growing regions further south and west. Southern coastal farmers came into competition with farmers in Georgia, Florida and especially California. With improvements in transportation systems and better refrigeration methods, farms that were thousands of miles from a commodity market could ship just as effectively and economically as a

⁴ LuAnn Jones, *Mama Learned Us to Work, Far, Women in the New South*, (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 53

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ John T. Schlebecker, *Whereby We Thrive, A History of American Farming, 1607-1972*, (Ames, Iowa, The Iowa State University Press, 1975), 210.

nearby farmer. With longer growing periods due to climate, two or more harvests countered a single one in New Hanover County. What the southeastern farmer had done in the late 1890s, the Florida and western farmer did in the 1920s and 1930s - arrived at market the earliest to obtain the best price for the commodity. The enlarging pool of cheap labor due to the migration of drought-driven mid-west farmers to the west outdid the inexpensive minority help in the South, lowering wholesale costs. Always searching for a bargain, northern markets clamored for the products from these sub-tropical agricultural zones. As Harriett Johnson affirms, "They left us with our crops and nobody to ship to."⁷

Farm dynamics changed across the country after World War I. Young men returning home from the war left the family farm behind in order to pursue opportunities in urban centers.⁸ This began a trend of generational decline for farmers; it was not a given factor that the heir would stay on the farm. Those that remained needed to shift with incoming technology to stay afloat financially. The insertion of the tractor on American farmsteads around 1914 coincides with increased acreage averages, while the farm population decreased.⁹ Mechanization required fewer people to work an area so enlarging the farm made sense. This transition to machinery to replace animal power required a monetary investment, which most farmers worked out on credit. However, Rebecca did not try this option.

Life for women in the 1920s was shifting too but not soon enough to assist the Martindale females. The United States enfranchised half of the voting population with the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution but suffrage was only the

⁷ Johnson interview, 23 March 2000.

⁸ *Wilmington Morning Star*, (Wilmington, North Carolina), 10 November 1920.

⁹ Schlebecker, *Whereby We Thrive*, 199-203.

beginning of the campaign for women's equality. Conservative Rebecca, for reasons known only to her, chose not to participate in this early right for women. As Miss Johnson states, "Before it came into effect a whole lot of men and women thought it was terrible for a woman to vote." Neither Rebecca nor Harriett (twenty-five by this time) voted at first but did later at the urging of a male relative who told her, "She deserved to," since she was doing the work of a man.¹⁰ Her interpretation of her gender closed this option off as she veiled behind her father's name as a pseudo-wife. A 1925 New Hanover County tax roll continues to list the property under the name of Mrs. H.A. Martindale despite the death of both her mother and father.¹¹ She set herself apart from any progressive movement, allowing herself to partake in a new trend only after a male gave the okay. Therefore, to think about applying for credit, much less finding a bank to loan money to a single woman with land as her only asset, fell into a high-risk category.

How did other women farmers fare after the First World War? A promotional pamphlet from the Atlantic Coastline Rail Road advertising land in the New Hanover County area touts, "There are more women farmers now than ever before – not those who work in the fields, but those who manage their own farms."¹² It does not say if they were on their own or had the support of male relatives or friends. Certainly, other women managed their family's farm, like Helena Swart, only daughter of Dutch immigrant farmer Dirk Swart. She did all the accounting for eight individual truck farms as well as the family dairy in the Castle Hayne area during the early decades of the 1900s. "She

¹⁰ Johnson interview, 16 May 2000.

¹¹ New Hanover County Tax Sheets, (Wilmington, North Carolina), 1925.

¹² Allen Maull, *Eastern North Carolina for the Farmer*, (Wilmington, North Carolina, Atlantic Coastline, 1916), 10.

was the boss” and everyone knew it, stated her nephew and niece.¹³ However, if a broker did not wish to deal with a woman running things, Miss Swart could turn to a brother, or nephew to step in. She never stood alone without male assistance. When this farm updated to modern standards, the men of the family dealt with the business end of securing loans and products.

Another successful farming family in New Hanover County held close blood ties to the Martindales. Rebecca’s cousins, George W. Trask and his eight sons (all descendants of original truck farmer Web Trask), began to mechanize following World War I. However, having moved in 1902 to the Castle Hayne area in the northern portion of the county, they created a physical distance between these relatives.¹⁴ The Trask family purchased large portions of land making their use of tractors more efficient: too many turns in short fields decreased productivity and did not justify machine utilization.¹⁵ G.W. Trask and Sons truck farming business continued to grow in the 1920s with the addition of a packaging facility on the property near the rail line.¹⁶ They held the capital necessary for investments and loans to do this expansion. Just as Web Trask took a risk on shipping the first loads of lettuce out of the country via rail in the 1890s, this family readily speculated that the farm would continue to reap a profit in this area of specialty.

Owen Martindale, the male heir of Henry Alexander Martindale, lived on a nearby farm. Having farmed with his father during the “lettuce boom” at the turn of the 20th century, Owen made enough money to strike out on a farm of his own. The 1915 tax

¹³ Cornelius Swart and June Tilden, interview with author, tapes and notes, 3 July 2002.

¹⁴ Frederick Graham Trask, *The Carolina Trask, an Informal History*, (Columbia, South Carolina, R.L. Bryan Company, 1981), 63.

¹⁵ Charles Regan Wilson and William Ferris, editors, *the Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, (Chapel Hill and London, The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 6.

¹⁶ C. Heide Trask, Junior, interview with author, tapes and notes, 5 September 2002.

assessment placed the value of his 435 acres at \$3300 denoting his continued success as a farmer.¹⁷ His expertise, along with his wife Anne Borneman and their four children, created a supportive network for Rebecca to fall back on for advice. This all changed in the early 1920s as Owen Martindale sold his farm and moved to Florida with his two sons. An advertisement listing his property noted it as "...a choice farming tract in the county," suggesting that the move did not occur due to business failure.¹⁸ Oral history accounts with his niece suggest personal difficulties led to his abrupt departure.¹⁹ Whatever the reason for the abandonment, he left behind his family obligations and loyalty to his widowed sister. Now Rebecca had to take full charge of her inheritance, with no supporting male counterpart, in a time of rapid change on farms. Owen Martindale's move to Florida appears ironic in the sense that his new farm further south may have undercut his family farm back in North Carolina.

Agricultural business by nature is a risk. The breakdown of any component of its process, such as weather extremes and third party transportation, can cause poor returns on the product. The farmers in New Hanover depended on the railroad lines hubbed in Wilmington to get their produce to the northern markets in a timely manner. In May of 1924, a train derailment "dammed the flow to market," delaying the arrival of the spring lettuce crop from this area by four days.²⁰ Within this short period, the perishable commodity could not be sold at premium price. All of the area's truck farmers took a "low blow" loss due to this incident.²¹ Recovery from this financial loss depended on the

¹⁷ New Hanover County Tax Sheets, (Wilmington, North Carolina), 1915.

¹⁸ *News Dispatch*, (Wilmington, North Carolina), 16 May 1924.

¹⁹ Johnson interview, 23 May 2000.

²⁰ Croquette W. Hewlett and Mona Smalley, *Between the Creeks Revised, Masonboro Sound, 1735-1985*, (Wilmington, New Hanover County Printing and Publishing Company, 1985), 91.

²¹ *Ibid.*

individual's, assets and shaped future business plans. G.W. Trask and Sons fared well and continued successfully in truck farming. Mr. Trask later recalled, "1924 was the only year we did not make a profit."²² With large investments in property and tractors, as well as a large family labor force, losing a single crop did not alter their farming process. For the Swartz family, both dairymen and truck farmers, remembering this incident took the form of a "one-cent" check, which arrived as payment for their entire spring crop.²³ This had to compensate for the seeds, fertilizers and labor for the season. Luckily, the dairy business carried them through this financial crisis without going too far into debt.

For Rebecca Johnson this derailment began a switch in her business planning. Generally, after a financial disaster, small farmers across the country exchanged their old plans for a system of survival, "to meet their immediate necessities and make money by the easiest and seemingly shortest methods."²⁴ Truck farming, dependant on various transportation modes, placed a risk she deemed unnecessary. As Harriett Johnson stated, "Sometimes the produce would get lost and they'd get wrecked" referring to the 1924 "smash of lettuce."²⁵ The record notes this public event but there were probably other shipping delays of lesser significance not affecting everybody. On the Martindale farm, the only capital was the land; if cultivating for northern markets hazarded the possibilities of future failures, then other resources required examination. Drawing on her father's example, Rebecca Johnson began developing her own farming strategy. Henry Alexander Martindale, not really a risk taker himself, had ridden the coattails of a relative with proven success; he died prior to modernization trends with machinery and enlarged

²² Trask interview, 5 September 2002.

²³ Swart and Tilden interview, 3 July 2002.

²⁴ Danhof, *Change in Agriculture*, 136.

²⁵ Johnson interview, 6 June 2000.

acreage. Educated in agriculture from his father, Henry Martindale, he passed this generational knowledge of farming to his children. Owen took this, bought his own farm, made it work and then moved out of state before the 1924 incident. Rebecca, having taken her “fixed plan of operation” from antiquated advice, chose not to change but to market closer to home. This became the easiest road to take, as she did not have the financial resources to enlarge and mechanize. She cultivated vegetables until the last horse died and did not invest in a replacement.²⁶ This type of strategy involved no strategy for the future; the farmer worked in the here and now. The Martindale women put together their own way of farming using what resources they had at hand. In retrospect, with the problems of farms during the Great Depression years, this survival strategy enabled Rebecca to hold on to her land.

Local markets in Wilmington changed after the First World War as well. The open-air market on Dock Street continued as a choice selling point for hinterland farmers during the 1920s and 1930s. The hardscrabble times of the Depression allowed for little speculation on regional or national market variability, creating a surge in activity at the local level. Driving to the nearest town by cart or truck was a concrete action whereby the farmer controlled all aspects of getting to market. The most bustling day continued to be Saturday, bringing people from neighboring counties to buy, sell and trade farm surpluses. One local farmer’s daughter recalled shucking butter beans all day on Friday, placing them in the proper containers while her father slept. He left his farm near the

²⁶ Johnson interview, 23 May 2000.

Pender County line around midnight to secure a premium spot at the market's opening by 6am the following day.²⁷

The indoor City Market changed dynamics as well. Built in the 1880s, it was architecturally outdated by the 1920s. What was once considered “the handsomest market in the south” fell into disrepair.²⁸ In 1919, the City of Wilmington converted the facility into a 3000-seat auditorium for use by the public.²⁹ Vendors continued to rent portions of the building but not on a regular basis. In 1923, the City council passed an ordinance allowing only women to sell at this site.³⁰ Whether this legislation enticed women to use the market house for their own protection or to generate additional revenue for the city, it offered women a site without male competition. It is not known if Rebecca Johnson ever utilized this particular City Market, although her conservative nature suggests she may have found a female-only venue congenial.

In addition to the large public places, small stores in the various neighborhoods accepted goods from local farmers. Owned and operated by local merchants, they kept in stock necessary and seasonal items. They usually specialized in certain items, such as only meat or only dry goods and did not contain a wide variety of choices like modern stores. Strong loyalties to customers and suppliers developed between owners and farmers.³¹ Newly-arrived immigrant merchants such as the Schutt Brothers on 6th Street, located their stores in primarily minority neighborhoods, while the long-standing ones

²⁷ Hannah Nixon, interview with author, tape and notes, 19 June 2002. Her father, a former slave, managed a peanut and vegetable farm at the Porter's Neck Plantation site in Wilmington, North Carolina.

²⁸ Tony P. Wrenn, *Wilmington, North Carolina: An Architectural and Historical Portrait*, (Charlottesville, University Press of Virginia, 1984), 46.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ City of Wilmington, North Carolina, minutes of meetings 1922-1924.

³¹ Chester H. Liebs, *Main Street to Miracle Mile, American Roadside Architecture*, (Boston, Little and Brown and Company, 1985), 118.

like the Cape Fear Trading Company on Front Street, serviced the white population.³² These were the ones with established ties to Henry Alexander Martindale, which set up connections for trading to his heirs too. With this option, Rebecca and later Harriet or Catherine had a choice to sell either as retailers or as wholesalers.

Rebecca sold chickens, eggs and milk in town. As historian LuAnn Jones notes, “poultry and dairy products formed the backbone of most farm women’s trade” as these items required little overhead to produce a profit.³³ The springhouse on the property held surplus dairy products from the cow and chickens. Once enough products accumulated, Rebecca took them to town and either sold directly from her cart or to familiar merchants. Miss Johnson recalled, “a quart of clabber sold for five cents” and the same for a dozen eggs.³⁴ Chickens, were dressed (cleaned and prepped) on Fridays to bring to town on Saturday or the day before any holiday like Christmas. “Somebody would want a chicken for Sunday dinner,” as Harriett noted on her mother’s trips into town with the product.³⁵ This is what led to the colloquial name for chicken as the “Holy Bird.”³⁶ Chicken and dairy product sales only covered a portion of expenses for the women.

A one-hundred-year-old house required maintenance to keep it from falling apart. These repairs cost money that sometimes was not available. To generate extra income for exterior upkeep such as replacing the roof, Rebecca sold treetops from the property to a local dealer for firewood. When she inherited the property, none of the farm’s trees had ever been sold to pulp mills, whose recruitment tactics generated ill will among farmers

³² Charles S. Fisher, interview with author, tape and notes, 12 June 2002. Verified via *Wilmington City Directories*, (Wilmington, North Carolina), 1922 noting ethnic sounding names and location in conjunction with his interview.

³³ Jones, *Mama Learned Us to Work*, 54.

³⁴ Johnson interview, 20 June 2000.

³⁵ Ibid., 23 May 2000.

³⁶ Jack M. Lea III, interview with author, tape and notes, 25 July 2002.

in the area. Continuing this rejection, she only sold the tops, pinecones and pine needles from the trees.³⁷ This conservative method preserved the forest located on the property for future use, keeping her in the survivalist mode.

Tenancy continued on the Martindale farm in the 1920s and 1930s. The families no longer lived directly on the property but in a dwelling on the parcel. The old Fergus House, a slave cabin, hired-help quarters, and lastly used as a tack shop to hold the accessories for Rebecca's fancy buggy, eventually fell into disrepair until only a chimneystack remained visible.³⁸ With a decreasing need for large chunks of land to truck farm, she began to sell it off to the tenants. With people lean on cash during the Great Depression, the deal more than likely involved a portion of crop profits for a certain number of seasons rather than an exchange of cash. Rebecca did not sell the land to generate income at this time but to help diminish her tax assets. Less land equaled less money going out with no return.

Rebecca learned how to run the farm from her father. However, due to changes in truck farming/agro-business and with no male counterpart, she did not venture into modernization. Instead of expanding, she diminished the farm's size by selling portions of property. Instead of cultivating fields, she exploited the natural resources of trees to pull her through in tough times. She passed these strategies to the next generation, her daughter and niece. When Rebecca fell into poor health in the late 1930s, the daily management of the farm transferred to Harriett Johnson and Catherine Casteen. At Rebecca's death in 1948, the ownership of the remaining 150 acres passed to them as well.

³⁷ Johnson interview, 23 May 2000.

³⁸ Ibid., 20 March 2000.

Harriett Hunter Johnson (1895-2001) was the only child of Rebecca Martindale Johnson. Though not born on her grandfather's farm, she came to live there as an eighteen-month-old infant when her father passed away. As a young girl she showed an interest in cultivation when she "stole her grandfather's watermelon seeds" to grow some herself.³⁹ Protected from early labor on the farm as a small child, she attended nearby Myrtle Grove School. She remembers helping out more as a teenager due to the death of her grandfather, Henry Alexander. "I did everything there was to do just about" according to Harriett, which included packing the lettuce in baskets for shipment to the north.⁴⁰ This exposure to the farm business later allowed for comparisons between truck farming as the moneymaker and the subsistence alternative.

Before 1924, while the farm was still prosperous from truck farming, Harriett "picked up on" practical nursing for patients in their homes. She had no formal education just what she learned from home and through the various physicians in the area, like Dr. Robert M. Fales.⁴¹ As a single women living in her family's house, her financial contribution supplemented the farm's intake. Harriett's non-farming career got them through some rough times, and may have helped determine Rebecca's decision to get out of truck farming. With this meager but steady money, the farm could survive. Harriett worked as a private nurse for twenty years but stopped when her mother's failing health took more time for care. While the farm went into part-time cultivation, Catherine Casteen, Harriett's cousin, kept-up their local market connections.

Catherine Casteen (1906-1984) was the only child born to Henry Alexander Martindale's other daughter, Catherine Martindale Casteen (1877-1906), who died in

³⁹ Ibid., 23 May 2000.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 20 March 2000.

⁴¹ Ibid., 16 May 2000.

childbirth. Rebecca brought the week old infant Catherine to the Martindale farm where she and Harriett were raised together. Charley Casteen, the baby's father, never saw Catherine again as he was kept away from family attachment.⁴² Growing up on the farm kept her interested in agriculture, but she experienced only the female ownership viewpoint, as she was five years old when her grandfather died. Traveling to market along with Rebecca set Catherine with trading connections at the local stores, which became important as the Martindale women got into bulb farming.

Prior to World War II, some New Hanover Country farmers began cultivating cut or bulb flowers following the arrival of Dutch immigrants, who brought this specialty over from their homeland. Local farmers shared truck farming practices with these new arrivals via agricultural societies and learned the techniques of flower growing directly from them. Soon many in the Castle Hayne area like the Trask and Swart families started planting fields of bulbs.⁴³ Some sent their products to the northern markets using the same system of brokering connected with their truck farming. The Martindale women, no longer interested in shipping risks, sold the flowers to local customers.

Planting bulb flowers required little investment for the Martindale women who had the land available. Once again, they used timber as a funding source to purchase their initial bulbs. The work required slight outside labor and could be managed adequately with animal power. Fields of gladiolas, daffodils, zinnias, marigolds, baby's breath, cornflowers and sweet peas took over where lettuce, tomatoes and beans once grew.⁴⁴ The flowers were seasonal however, and only brought in income through the late spring and summer portion of the year. Therefore, the women also started raising potted plants.

⁴² Ibid., 17 July 2000.

⁴³ Swart/Tilden interview, 3 July 2002 and Trask interview, 5 September 2002.

⁴⁴ Johnson interview, 16 May 2000.

Again, the initial investment was minimal and spread out over several seasons. Some personal plants were very old having been with the family before Harriett came along.⁴⁵ Cuttings from the original plants took root in clay pots, decreasing the need to purchase new plants every year. Begonias, Geraniums, ferns and “Crab-Claws,” or Christmas cactus filled pots and boxes surrounding the house along with rare plants such as the Night Blooming Cactus.⁴⁶

This line of thinking generated a larger venture for the Martindale women. In the late 1930s while Harriet visited a patient’s home, she noticed a terrarium, filled with an array of foliage. Knowing her family’s property and the exotic flora that grew wild there gave Harriett the idea of making a specialty terrarium.⁴⁷ After receiving permission from the North Carolina State Department of Agriculture to harvest this protected species, Miss Johnson exclaimed, “we were in the Fly-Trap business!”⁴⁸ She and Catherine gathered the Venus Fly Traps, Sun Dews and Pitcher plants, placed them in glass containers, (mainly fish bowls), to sell for “twenty-five cents” each.⁴⁹ The popularity of these plants generated a considerable income just by the significant quantity available. These Flytrap terrariums, along with the potted plants and cut flowers, sold mainly locally. Others either sold directly from the property or shipped to individual customers; one went as far as Italy.⁵⁰ In addition, some of the bulb flowers wholesaled to local florists such as Lucy Moore and Will Reheder, for their stores.⁵¹ However, the majority of these items sold on consignment at The Grocerteria, the first self-serve store in Wilmington.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 20 March 2000.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Johnson interview, 16 May 2000.

With agricultural modernization came changes in selling farm products to the public. Mass production led to an interest in self-service at markets, which eliminated the store clerk.⁵² With eye-level shelving, customers could choose from products brought in from across the region, which consolidated buying into one-stop.⁵³ The Grocerteria, located at 27 Market Street near Front Street in the downtown business district, opened in Wilmington in November 1920 with advertisements stating, “There is a Difference.”⁵⁴ This store was a mixed service facility with some items selected by the customer while others required a clerk’s assistance. After shopping, all items went through a central checkout counter thus expediting the market experience.⁵⁵ Under independent ownership, (not connected to a chain like an A&P or Piggly-Wiggly), The Grocerteria continued the tradition of trading with local farmers such as the Martindales. Catherine brought the farm’s fresh flowers, potted plants, and later the Venus Flytraps here for the public to buy. The women did not have to stand at a booth or work out of a cart to vend but left the products on a commission basis, receiving their pay after the sale.⁵⁶ Having a transitional store such as the Grocerteria continued the farm’s economic ties to Wilmington merchants.

The ingenuity of these women kept them afloat using the resources at hand. As Miss Johnson stated, “If we thought we could get any money out of it, then we’d get into it.”⁵⁷ Grapes were another moneymaking product the Martindale women juggled. A story passed through the various generations of the family tells about grape vines existing on

⁵² Liebs, *Main Street to Miracle Mile*, 120.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 121.

⁵⁴ *Wilmington Star News*, (Wilmington, North Carolina), 18 November 1920.

⁵⁵ Liebs, *Main Street to Miracle Mile*, 123.

⁵⁶ Johnson interview, 23 May 2000.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 6 June 2000.

the property when Henry Martindale purchased it in 1823, along with a pear orchard.⁵⁸ Harriett always remembers having several vines of Scuppernong grapes, “both the white and the black type,” on the farm for family consumption.⁵⁹ Beginning in the late 1930s, they allowed the public to pick the grapes in season. The fee charged depended on the amount picked to take home and the amount eaten right off the vines. The women would also gather grapes for certain customers, charging \$5 per bushel.⁶⁰ Again, this product required only slight attention from the women to make a profit. These grapes did not go into town for sale at all; the customers had to come to them.

With people coming onto the property to purchase flowers, flytraps, or grapes, curiosity about the old farmhouse arose. Friends and relatives coming to visit were allowed inside the main house but not the ordinary customers. Starting in the 1950s, at the urging of fellow church members, the women opened their home to the public. This may have been the first house tour in New Hanover County.⁶¹ Originally done to raise money for the church, once the tour became a weekly event (on Sunday), the money went directly to Harriett and Catherine. Of course, the influx of additional people to the property increased the sales of their flytraps, grapes and potted plants.

For the small amount of physical labor needed on the farm, the women hired outside help. These workers came from a pool of familiar black families in the areas, some descendants of former slaves and tenants of the Martindales, like the MacDonalds.⁶² By the 1950s, they owned and managed their own farms but continued come over to plow, turn over the fields or repair fences. This followed an old arrangement with ties to the

⁵⁸ Ibid., 20 March 2000.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 16 May 2000.

⁶¹ *Wilmington Star News*, (Wilmington, North Carolina), 26 October 1982.

⁶² Johnson interview, 16 May 2000.

antebellum period continued by Henry Alexander Martindale through to Harriett. These African-American men kept their obligations to this pseudo-family more so than blood relatives did. The women maintained their loyalty as well by never hiring anyone else when they were unavailable. “All our colored men died and left us,” avowed Harriett, leaving the women abandoned once again.⁶³

During the 1960s, the aging women found it harder to keep up with all their ventures. After their horse died, neither Harriett nor Catherine learned to drive a car, so trips to town were sporadic, relying either on friends or on public transportation. They got out of bulb farming in the 1950s when labor expenses took over the profits. The Flytrap business petered out due to over-harvesting the plants; eventually no new plants grew. They then bought flytraps from the large farm of the Levi MacDonalds, the black family who helped them with labor. When those too were exhausted, they got completely out of selling them. Harriet said, “When he (Levi) quits, Harriett and Catherine are going to quit too. And we did.”⁶⁴ Pulling out of their last wholesale venture closed their ties with the city.

Withdrawn to the remaining farm property, the women tried to sustain themselves on the sales of potted plants and grapes from their old house. However, this portion of their income was jeopardized because the arbors required heavy maintenance that they were unwilling to do. Their empty fields had rented out to others for either a fee or a portion of the season’s crop returns. In the 1960s, they began selling parcels of their land. “If we ran into somebody close by that wanted a little piece of land, we’d sell it,” said Miss

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 20 March 2000.

Johnson.⁶⁵ With this capital, they built a new house, complete with electricity and indoor plumbing, on a plot adjacent to the family house where they continued to sell their wares. In her senior years, Harriett became the sage of the family history and holder of antiquities.

Harriett began to think about selling the house her great-grandfather built but wanted to find a suitable person. She held personal ties to the house and surrounding property as she had witnessed both her grandfather and mother work the land. "I love that old house over there, I guess I was a fool about it," stated Miss Johnson.⁶⁶ The house and land had been the only capital she ever knew; to part with it was a hard decision. The time came in 1969 when she sold the property to the McGinnis family. However, it was closely watched, as both Harriett and Catherine lived in the house across the land until they died.

The women of the Martindale family took control of a thriving truck farm in a time of rapid changes in agricultural processes. External factors such as decreased value of North Carolina farmland which compared acre for acre \$3704 to the national average \$8949 in 1925, created a less than ideal situation with many living hand to mouth.⁶⁷ Farms got bigger and mechanized to continue to compete with other vegetable producers across the country. A shift further south and west added to this variable market brokering, where the best and earliest product took premium dollar. When the men abandoned the farm - - whether by death or choice - - the women tried to stay on track. However, a significant loss took place whereby the risks outweighed the benefits, so the farm shifted into an alternative trajectory than the dominant one.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 23 May 2000.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 16 May 2000.

⁶⁷ Hugh Talmage Lefler and Albert Ray Newsome, *The History of a Southern State, North Carolina*, 3rd edition, (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 578-579

Many questions remain regarding the choices that the women made in a half-century of farm ownership. Why did all three remain single when marriage (or remarriage) would have given them the thing they lacked, a reliable male? Why did no male relative step in to help them, especially when such a close relative, successful in farming, had many sons? With a large cotton mill operating in Wilmington by 1900, why did the two younger women not seek employment there? Why did they not hire outside this particular labor pool, or were they so tied to tradition that it was improper? Any change in these decisions might have put the farm on a different path. The history of the Martindale farm offers another view of New Hanover County agriculture, a gendered tradition. This broader perspective of local history, as exemplified in the duality of the Martindale Farm, makes it a valuable resource warranting preservation.

CHAPTER FOUR: SHIFTING THE PRESERVATION PARADIGM TOWARDS RURAL SITES

Everyday in the United States, four square miles of our nation's farmlands are shifted to uses other than agriculture. The thief is urban sprawl.¹

It has long been an iron law of the real estate market that if farmland stands in the path of urban expansion, no crop is valuable enough to keep it out of developer's hands.²

Historic preservation is a relatively new enterprise in New Hanover County with the formation of the Historic District (HD) and Historic Wilmington Foundation (HWF) in the late 1960s. Although the city of Wilmington Historic Preservation Commission has a countywide mandate, the bulk of their historical interests stays focused on preservation issues of the downtown area. As the largest HD within the state of North Carolina at 230 blocks, it is a Herculean task just to regulate and maintain standards ensuring that its contextual architectural integrity does not change, leaving little energy to look at what is happening elsewhere in the county. Nonetheless, the rural hinterlands, not so far out anymore as the thrust of the city's growth clips away at the distance, were home to viable contributors to the city's economy. Agricultural endeavors in this county are passing as quickly as the farmers themselves are, thus losing a valuable historical resource. What is more disturbing is the loss of the icon of the farmer's life style, the vernacular house, which stands as a visible reminder to a past way of life. The Martindale Farm is as worthy of preserving as any downtown structure due to its 19th century representative house style, contribution to the community, gender perspectives and interpretive possibilities. It is time to put this rural feature back on the mental map of local citizens,

¹ Shirley Foster Fields, "Where Have the Farm Lands Gone?" (Washington, D.C. by the National Agricultural Lands Study, 1979), 2.

² Barney Feder, "Sowing Preservation, Towns Are Slowing Invasion of Farms by Bulldozers," *New York Times*, (New York City, New York), 20 March 1997, 19.

leaders and organization to prevent a significant piece of the community's identity from being lost.

In 1969, J.P. (b-1918) and Geraldine McGinnis (b-1921), former grape customers of Miss Harriett Johnson, brought two of their five children to live in the circa-1823 Martindale farmhouse. [Figure 11] After 150 years in the Martindale family, the new owners brought the house into the 21st century with modernizing alterations. Electricity came as one of the first changes after bringing the interior wiring up to current code. The installation of inside plumbing allowed for bathrooms; the previous occupants had used outhouses. The realignment of several walls and the staircase changed the room configurations to better accommodate the family and the old coquina shell wall plastering fell to sheet rock replacements. By the 1970s, a new kitchen replaced a downstairs bedroom and a large family/dining room addition enlarged the living space. The master bedroom downstairs, once a detached sleeping shed, completed the modifications on the interior.

The outside of the property went through adjustments too. Replacing the windows and doors at the rear of the building with wider ones left only the front as original. The east-end gable chimney tumbled down during a storm; these bricks became the materials for construction of a new front porch to replace an old wooden one. Tearing down or removing outbuildings, such as the dairy house, occurred in conjunction with the use of modern electrical appliances. The last vestiges of the Martindale crops -- the Scuppernong grape vines -- lasted until the 1990s, when they too fell from disuse. Never true farmers raising crops for markets, the McGinnis family reverted to a type of



Figure 11. Martindale-McGinnis Farmhouse Full Front View - 1969

home gardening, once practiced by independent farmers, to supply as much of their own foods as possible, by cultivating a small vegetable garden.

After owning the house and approximately ten acres of land for over thirty years, the McGinnises know the land value as a potential development site is escalating. These senior owners are facing the same predicament as the aging women farmers before them. They are “cash poor and land rich,” with the property now serving as the couple’s retirement capital. Moreover, the benefits of rehabilitation and maintenance on a house in its second century may “appear short-sighted” and financially daunting to people in their eighties.³ J.P. and Geraldine realize the historic significance of the site by the recognition plaque placed on their home by the HWF. As long as they remain in good health, it is their wish to keep the house and the immediate property intact. In their search for ways to fulfill this desire there is no one certain path to take, and the guiding hands of local historical societies focus on their downtown mission, leaving the McGinnises on their own to figure this out.

It is more than just the McGinnis family in this situation, living in this former rural area, now in the urban sprawl zone. [Figure 12] The McGinnises own the former Martindale farmhouse and 9.95 acres of land with a value of \$209,361 based on the county’s 1999 real market assessment.⁴ A son, Stephen McGinnis, lives in a house on a portion of the original Martindale property beside the main house. His 1995 brick house and 4.30 acres total value stands at \$360,654.⁵ The old Martindale property, under the ownership of Miss Harriett Johnson, divided when she sold to the McGinnises in 1969.

³ Kathleen Pepi Southern, *Historic Preservation in Rural North Carolina: Problems and Potentials*, (The Historic Preservation Foundation of North Carolina, 1980), 24.

⁴ www.nhcgov.com New Hanover County Tax Department, Real Estate Tax Records Inquiry, 2003.

⁵ Ibid.



Figure 12. 2002 New Hanover County Tax Map – McGinnis Property Highlighted

She and her cousin Catherine lived on adjunct property until their deaths. These 5.17 acres of land, now controlled by her heirs, are currently valued at \$138,243.⁶ All of the properties' combined acreage of wooded land encourages inquiries from prospective land developers interested in building a subdivision there. In October of 2002, at the owner's request the zoning restrictions changed from (R)esidential-15 to R-10. This new designation, primarily utilized by developers, allows for construction of houses on 10,000 square foot lots, instead of the 15, 000 square feet limitation set for R-15 zones.⁷ This re-zoning signifies the house and property are in immediate jeopardy. The pressure of the land being more valuable for construction development than for historic preservation is on.

Generally, in the field of historic preservation this would be a story of presenting ideals, making believers out of a group who already believe in preservation by demonstrating the significance of this particular endangered house. However, in Wilmington, not only does the public need reawakening to rural roots, so do the established organizations set-up for just this type of situation. According to Catherine Bishir, North Carolina architectural historian, "preservationists, come to their work not objectively but weighted with their own values" which in the end "affects their judgments and actions."⁸ These ideals come into play when interpreting professional standards by which properties are deemed significant for preservation. As Bishir notes, a certain type of "politics of culture" generates bias for evaluating appropriateness, which in New

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ www.nhcgov.com/PLN/PLNzoning.asp New Hanover County Zoning Codes, (Wilmington, North Carolina, 2003).

⁸ Catherine W. Bishir, "Yuppies, Bubbas, and the Politics of Culture," in *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture III*, Thomas Carter and Bernard L. Herman, editors, (Columbia, University of Missouri Press, 1989), 10.

Hanover County slants towards the urban center of Wilmington.⁹ However, rural and farmland conservation, though lagging behind that of work done in the urban environment, is not devoid of existing standards and criteria via government legislation. There is a corpus of resources available for communities and individuals alike to gather knowledge on the subject of rural preservation. The question becomes how to shift local models to allow a site like the Martindale Farm to partake from professional assistance.

The first step is to increase recognition of the task through various levels. The Martindale farmhouse, already noted by the HWF with a file and a plaque, requires more than just a local distinction. This does nothing for the immediate problem of possible destruction by the encroaching subdivision projects. The Wilmington HD occupies the full attention of the HWF until something or someone forces them to look at a site elsewhere. This has recently happened with the possible destruction of the Babies Hospital, a public building out of the HD boundaries. With historical research led by academics filtering through a range of publications, the downtown groups have broadened their attention to include this, for the moment, under public scrutiny. In pushing for rural preservation, cultural geographer Henry Glassie notes, “When all the old buildings have decayed and the land has been paved, there will be no record to challenge the urban view.”¹⁰ Therefore, the need to push for additional recognition of the Martindale farm becomes an important step in securing its protection.

The state of North Carolina handles preservation through several offices, notably the Department of Agriculture (NCDA) and the Department of Cultural Resources (DCR). The NCDA, organizers of the annual State Fair in Raleigh, holds historically strong ties

⁹ Ibid., 14.

¹⁰ Henry Glassie, “The Rural Landscape,” in *Forum Journal*, Volume 17, No. 2, winter 2003, 35.

to the agricultural community. A program started in 1998 called, “Century Farms,” evolved as a way of connecting the rural past with the present. This is a certificate of recognition to farm families who have owned or operated the property for 100 years or more. Every five years a dinner given to honor those farms selected in that cycle carries forth the designation. A publication of a commemorative book, *North Carolina Century Farms: 100 Years of Continuous Agricultural Heritage*, came from the first collection of applications. The only New Hanover County representative is no longer viable.¹¹ Since the recognition is for the farm property itself, the Martindale Farm meets the conditions set forth by this program with active farming for at least one-hundred continuous years. Inclusion would bring forth additional publicity to the subject.

It is the job of the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to interpret national policies affecting preservation on the state level. The SHPO, under the direction of the DCR in North Carolina, delegates the mission of the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).¹² With a designation of this caliber, a property not only receives a significant distinction, the owners become eligible for tax benefits of 20 to 30 % on refurbishment projects at the state and federal levels. This honor places a property on an elevated list with national landmarks that “preserve for public use historic sites, buildings and objects of national significance for the inspiration and benefit of the people of the United States.”¹³

¹¹ *North Carolina Century Farms: 100 Years of Continuous Agricultural Heritage*, (Raleigh, North Carolina Department of Agriculture, 1989), 127. The Floyd Farm circa 1900, destroyed by fire in 1947.

¹² In 1966, legislation of the National Historic Preservation Act passed in the United States Congress resulting in the formation of a National Register of Historic Places.

¹³ William J. Murtagh, *Keeping Time: The History and Theory of Preservation in America*, (New York, Sterling Publishing Company, Inc., 1990), 12.

Acceptance to the NRHP study list became possible due to original research regarding the Martindale farm. This preliminary step brought the property to the attention of a committee at the SHPO called the North Carolina National Register Advisory Committee. This board, comprised of professionals and citizens with expertise in history, architecture and archaeology, meet three times a year. Judging the site as “potentially eligible” by the standards of preservation justified its placement on the study list. The next step is the actual nomination, which requires additional documentation to complete a technical mandate. A professional consultant selected from an approved list provided by the Committee usually does this step. An attempt in the 1970s to place the Martindale farmhouse on the study list failed due to a question of structural integrity with the exterior change of the west-end chimney removal. The professionals evaluating it at the time may have allowed “personal and class values to dominate” their exclusion.¹⁴ Over the last thirty years, new research on the farmstead warranted another attempt, which proved successful in 2001. The evaluation of the house came from the following standards:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, material, workmanship, feeling and association and:

- A- Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B- That are associated with the lives of person significant in our past; or
- C- That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D- That have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in Pre -history or history.¹⁵

¹⁴ Bishir, “Yuppies, Bubbas, and the Politics of Culture,” 13.

¹⁵ *National Register Fact Sheet 2 - Applying the Criteria*, National Register of Historic Places.

The Martindale site met three out of the four criteria, A, C and D. Component B, dealing with a person of historic significance, is the only one the property did not yield at present. The agricultural history of the farm, especially during the truck farming period of the 1900s “lettuce boom” contributes to the diversity of local history thereby meeting the first evaluation point. Along with the story of women owners and African-Americans, in roles as former slaves and hired laborers, this farm’s history encompasses a larger portion of the regional agricultural history than previously suggested. By utilizing the oral histories of Miss Harriett Johnson, the last Martindale who lived on the farm and other farmers in the county, the importance of their contributions become more evident through their marketing choices and cultivation practices. Retrieving additional oral histories specifically with the Martindale’s African-American laborers, the MacDonald family, may broaden this history even further.

The farmhouse itself met the standard from item C. This still standing house, built in 1823, represents a common type of 19th century vernacular structure, though due to its age, is distinctive among today’s architecture. It exemplifies a period when most construction occurred by the hands of laymen, a trade shared by experience and word of mouth. The original portion, constructed from on-site resources of pine and cypress, along with the newer additions retain integrity in its location. In other words, the house remains where it was built, a feature not all historic sites can claim. The modifications done by the McGinnises do not distract from the overall architecture and are appropriate for contemporary use.¹⁶ The house remains the focus of the farm.

The last standard for evaluation D, delivers the weightiest message, that of potential yields. Archaeology supplements the historic records with concrete examples from a

¹⁶ Bishir, “Yuppies, Bubbas, and the Politics of Culture,” 14.

specific period, which the Martindale site successfully accomplished. With the 2001 semester excavation project in the analysis stage, information from the artifact assemblages permitted an earlier dating of the property, placing it in the colonial era. The finding of the “Virginia House,” an impermanent structure, allowed inferences to ownership and material culture not previously encountered in the Wilmington area. Other areas of the property not part of the original excavation, like the privy site, cistern, barn area, slave cemetery, will generate even greater information regarding farm life. It is with these potentials that the Martindale farm stands the strongest chance of receiving the nomination for the National Register of Historic Places and raising its recognition to another level.

Part of the acceptance for the study list came from a change in perception of value in the field of preservation. A 1980s federal study of National Farmlands (NALS) questioned why farmlands were diminishing at an alarming rate and revealed that some agricultural reform actually hindered farmland conservation. As a result, the 1981 Farmland Protection Act created a committee to consider the impacts of programs and suggest alternatives.¹⁷ One idea launched from this committee began Agricultural Districting (AD), with regulations and standards parallel to historic districts. These AD’s do not offer protection from destruction but create a core of public awareness possibly slowing the rate of land use exchange.

North Carolina, a state with strong agricultural ties, initiated mandates of change as well. The DCR issued a recommendation in the 1980s that conservation organizations across the state need to, “take a broad, interdisciplinary approach to rural preservation

¹⁷ Samuel N. Stokes, A. Elizabeth Watson and Shelly S. Mastran, *Saving America’s Countryside, a Guide to Rural Conservation*, 2nd Edition, (Baltimore and London, The John Hopkins University Press, 1997), 320.

planning.”¹⁸ Counties primarily thought of as urban centers have taken the lead in implementing this mission. In 1998, the Wake County Historic Preservation Commission began a study of five surrounding rural areas to identify potential listing for the National Register.¹⁹ This produced a number of viable properties to research further while at the same time raising public awareness to their value. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg area’s Landmark Commission noted rapidly changing land uses resulting from urban sprawl decreased residents’ knowledge of their original agricultural purpose. With pockets of sections retaining their rural character, they developed a goal not to prohibit urban expansion but “to manage growth, so that areas that are significant to the rural history of Charlotte-Mecklenburg are preserved with the context of economically viable development.”²⁰ Smart growth through careful planning allows preservation of valuable historic properties. New Hanover County groups should take notice of these models.

With time of the essence, garnering the interest of a state preservation group and bypassing local organizations might force this issue of rural preservation for the Martindale farm. With a National Register certification and a North Carolina “Century Farm” honor, the property holds incentives for a buyer willing to hold it in preservation. Founded in 1939, the Historic Preservation Foundation of North Carolina (PNC) is a private association that assists in protection of heritage sites within the state. Hailed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as “the model organization of its kind” in the south, PNC controls a revolving fund designated for rescuing endangered properties in

¹⁸Southern, *Historic Preservation in Rural North Carolina*, 71.

¹⁹ *Landmark News, a Newsletter for the owners of Wake County Historic Landmarks*, (Raleigh, Wake County Historic Preservation Commission, Fall 1998), 1.

²⁰ www.cmhpf.org/properties Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Preservation Foundation, (Charlotte, North Carolina, 2003)

eminent danger of destruction.²¹ For the McGinnises, donating their property to a land trust for conservation is not feasible due to financial constraints. PNC offers hope of finding a potential buyer willing to rehabilitate the property. In this way, the house and property stand protected, for the moment, from demolition from emergent subdivisions, as PNC offers power in holding off development. They have a strong obligation to uphold rural preservation in this age of fast development as well as their urban interest. Some buildings remain under PNC management, such as the Bellamy Mansion in Wilmington, leading to a community connection with the group already. PNC is not the ultimate goal; to remain a financially viable business they endorse an exit strategy. If a property is not sold within a certain period of time to a preservation conscious person then PNC puts the property back on the proverbial chopping block for public purchase. This interim gives a chance for organization of a strong foundation of support for the Martindale farm, possibly bringing forth a local purchaser.

Strong sentimental factors evoke positive preservation assertions in some people. A survey conducted in the 1980s in North Carolina asked farmers what interest they held in preserving their house and property. The positive results supported the concept as, “most owners were unwilling to sell their property because of family or sentimental associations with it.”²² People currently living in Wilmington still hold with strong agricultural ties through their families. The Trasks, descendants of the original truck farmer, Web Trask and the Camerons, also related to the Trasks, are two of these families. Much sought after for various projects, they may well be interested in purchasing or funding the Martindale

²¹ www.presnc.org Preservation North Carolina, (Raleigh, North Carolina, 2003)

²² Southern, *Historic Preservation in Rural North Carolina*, 138.

Farm, as they personally knew Miss Harriett Johnson as distant relatives.²³ Bringing the plight of the old house and property to public light would bring in the established philanthropist families, solidifying its significance to the historical communities.

What happens when people with local agricultural connections die out and this aspect of community history is lost due to no visible reminders? According to a 1992 study done by an organization dedicated to stop the loss of productive farmlands, American Farmlands Trust, rural lands are diminishing across the country at a rate of 20%-40% per ten-year period. North Carolina falls in the median range with about 31% of land use change.²⁴ At this rate, agricultural heritage will pass from living memory with the next generation of leadership. The loss of the land equates to the loss of vernacular structures, leaving only the romanticized forms of Southern houses available for future generations. Local historian, Louis T. Moore stated in the 1950s, "It is regrettable but true that of all the colonial mansions along the lower Cape Fear, only stately Orton reminds us of a glorious past but not forgotten era."²⁵ Preserving the Martindale farm would broaden this ideal.

An example of urban development gone too far is Brooklyn, New York. Once considered the "garden" of New York City, it went through a land use crisis of "deagriculturalization" where farmlands sold to developers at a rapid pace in the late 1800s.²⁶ A drop in crop returns and shift in growing patterns led to the grounds being devalued as farm property. With the population increasing in the metropolis of New York

²³ C. Heide Trask, Junior, interview with author, tape and notes, 3 September 2002.

²⁴ Feder, "Farmland Preservation," 1.

²⁵ Louis T. Moore, "Colonial Plantations of the Lower Cape Fear," *Historic Wilmington-New Hanover County, North Carolina*, (Stamp Defiance Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, Wilmington, North Carolina, 1958), 50.

²⁶ Marc Linder and Lawrence S. Zacharias, *Of Cabbages and Kings County, Agriculture and the Formation of Modern Brooklyn*, (Iowa City, University of Iowa Press, 1999), 272.

City, their hinterlands took on a new dimension as potential suburbs for the city. The farmers, left out of the city planning process, were left out of the vision of the future as well.²⁷ Purchasing the farmlands, most with history dating to the early Dutch colonists, for this urban sprawl development over one hundred years ago, wipes from the current memory the agricultural heritage of the area. Historians Marc Linder and Lawrence Zacharias coined a phrase for this process, “Brooklynization,” to serve as a warning to other communities of the loss of identity that comes with the loss of rural lands.²⁸ Wilmington stands close to this example as development takes precedent over preservation in planning.

New Hanover County and Wilmington, closely linked with their overlapping economic boundaries, share a need for new areas to develop into service centers and housing areas due to a rise in population.²⁹ This focus on land development in the New Hanover County area resulted from the formation of the “Committee of 100” in 1956. In the late 1950s when the Atlantic Coastline Railroad moved its headquarters to Jacksonville, Florida, a challenge rose to bring new business here. In 1956, an organization of business owners, civic leaders and private citizens, called the “Committee of 100,” successfully pursued industrial-based businesses to locate plants in New Hanover County.³⁰ Companies such as General Electric, enticed by large land tracts and tax incentives, brought the bulk of these newcomers into the region, intensifying urban sprawl. Coincidentally, preservation efforts began around the same time with a focus on

²⁷ Ibid., 294.

²⁸ Ibid., 244.

²⁹ Stokes, et al, *Saving America's Countryside*, 320. The data shows a change from 70,000 in 1960 to 100,000 in 1990.

³⁰ Andrew Dupstadt, “Maximizing the Advantages and Minimizing the Disadvantages: The Committee of 100 and its Roles in the Economic Development of Wilmington and the Immediate Vicinity,” Masters Thesis, history, University of North Carolina, Wilmington, 1999, Abstract.

bringing people back to core city area. According to preservation historians, this idea of downtown revitalization “can be an effective tool for combating sprawl and, thus conserving the open lands and natural resources of a community.”³¹ The two sides of preservation, with rural and urban perceptions, work together towards the same goal, preservation of local treasures, which the Martindale farm is one.

In an ideal situation, with the farmhouse and property protected by an organized group with a preservationist-minded owner, what more is wanted? Of course, it would be public accessibility to the site on a routine basis. A private owner holds a bundle of rights to his/her property allowing anything to happen to the grounds unless prohibited by law through zoning and/or land use regulations.³² For a property under the protection of preservation societies this limits any alterations to the structure itself. It does not suggest the opening of the house to the public however. Preserved houses under private ownership usually open to the community for special occasions such as the Old Wilmington by Candlelight tour of historic homes or the Azalea Festival house tour sponsored by the Historic Wilmington Foundation. This limits the amount of traffic walking through these old structures but also denies regular public viewing. The Martindale farm, with its potential for numerous interpretations, necessitates a public forum.

The formation of a foundation for the Martindale farm would permit museum preservation status. Taking it from private ownership to non-profit organization status would allow the structure greater public access. *Saving America's Countryside, a Guide to Rural Preservation* is a standout manual for developing such an organization.

³¹ Stokes, et al, *Saving America's Countryside*, 258.

³² *Ibid.*, 215.

Supported by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, it covers material relating to wetlands, forests, wildlife preserves and outdoor recreation areas. A large portion of this book is dedicated to farmland preservation, "...as it is associated with a particular way of life that contributed to American traditions."³³ Case studies of various rural preservation projects are included along with suggestions for starting an organization.

Forming a non-profit group, classified as a 501 (c)(3) under a federal and state tax-exempt category, is permitted after the filing of Articles of Incorporation. This status allows special rates for postal mailings, store discounts and most importantly eligibility for grants. Funding from grants comes from various levels of government, organizations or private businesses that generate the core money for a start-up project such as the Martindale farm. In Wilmington where most arts projects begin in this fashion, non-profit groups find themselves competing for every dollar. With the current economy, the competition for government funds for new projects is harsh. The likelihood of a new organization's success comes from the people involved in the project -- the members of the board of the foundation. To get people interested in this venture through capital investments or professional experiences, they need to get something back for their efforts in the form of monetary returns. For the long-term view of preservation, this involves proposing an even larger project.

My end-goal for the Martindale farm is its development into a living history museum. A public preservation house, as an interpretive site, is singular in nature. People walk through, look at the furniture, fabric and decorative arts and leave without ever being a part of the site. A living history museum is multi-dimensional with more opportunities to

³³ Ibid., 33.

“attract and inform the public.”³⁴ A farm offers demonstration of farm practices with visible results, sometimes with the help of visitors. This pushes the take-home messages to another level by physically involving patrons with daily events. Also living history museums attached to rural heritage programs bring in tourists who spend money in the community. A 2001 Report on Cultural and Historic Tourism states, “visitors to historic sites stay longer and spend more money than any other kinds of tourists” with averages of 4.7 nights compared to 3.4 nights, bringing in \$631 per trip to the local economy versus \$457 on a regular visit.³⁵ These incentives might interest a variety of people in the New Hanover County area to work with the Martindale Living History Farm.

What exactly is a living history museum? The opening paragraph of John Schlebecker and Gale Peterson’s *the Living Historical Farms Handbook* offers a definition:

On living historical farms, men farm as they once did during some specific time in the past. The farms have tools and equipment like those once used, and they raise the same type of livestock and plants used during the specified era. The operations are carried on in the presence of visitors.³⁶

Living history farms have a long history themselves. The oldest example in the United States is Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts, which began in 1952. An integral part of the village is the Pliny Freeman farm, which interprets New England farm practices around the 1840s. Another successful site is the Living History Iowa Farms started in 1976. This is a series of farms interpreted over a multiple year period beginning in the 1700s through the 1900s. Another multiple farm program is offered at Old World Wisconsin, which depicts the various immigrant influences on regional farming during

³⁴ John Fortier, “Thoughts on the Re-Creation and Interpretation of Historical Environments,” in *A Living History Reader*, Volume One, Jay Anderson, editor, (Nashville, Tennessee, American Association for State and Local History, 1991), 18.

³⁵ www.ruralheritage.org Rural Heritage Program part of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, (Washington, D.C. 2003).

³⁶ John T. Schlebecker and Gale B. Peterson, *Living Historical Farms Handbook*, (Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution Press, 1972), 1.

the 1800s. All of these sites owe their beginning to the oldest open-air museum in the world located in Skansen, Sweden. This re-creation began in 1891 to link the public to their past cultural heritage and has served as a proto-type to all other agriculturally based projects ever since.³⁷ Through examination of these models, planning a living history museum can take shape.

An example of a living history museum farm in closer proximity to New Hanover County is the Freewoods Farm. Located approximately ten miles outside of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, a project is developing as a heritage site interpreting the ownership/tenancy of African-American farmers between the years 1865 and 1900. Their mission is to educate through hands-on programming, emphasizing animal-powered agriculture and small farm prosperity. A secondary goal, to promote tourism, will enhance minority economy in the area.³⁸ Currently not open to the public except for special occasions, the potential of its mission is yet to be determined. What the group has implemented follows specific guidelines from publications and other successful living history museums. That is why it is a good model for the Martindale farm project to follow.

The groundwork for developing Freewoods Farm began from local initiative. Mr. O'Neal Smalls, raised on a farm in Horry County, brought in his personal perspective of preservation as originator of this project. Working without any salary, this Harvard Law School Graduate took on the responsibility of coordinating the foundation board. This board of directors came from businesspersons and professionals in the area, chosen for

³⁷ R. Douglas Hurt, "Agricultural Museums, A New Frontier for the Social Sciences," in *A Living History Reader*, Volume One, Jay Anderson, editor, (Nashville, Tennessee, American Association for State and Local History, 1991), 63-65.

³⁸ www.aim.deis.sc.edu/freewoods Freewoods Farm Foundation, (Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, 2003).

their expertise in the field and financial networks. These are the same types of community connections the Martindale Farm needs for developing its foundation. The board members serve in an advisory capacity, deciding on preliminary considerations and guidelines.³⁹ As Mr. Smalls states, “They are taking things slow to maintain accuracy” referring to implementing the project.⁴⁰ Freewoods Farm is only partially operational to date after four years of preparation with no projected date for completion.

Part of the delay in opening to the public is their broad spectrum of interpretation. *The Living Historical Farms Handbook* states, “The project that begins with only a museum or farm may well evolve and grow.”⁴¹ This holds true for the Freewoods Farm. To make the farm attractive to a wide variety of visitors the foundation board chose three educational experiences to represent small farms throughout the South; Main Street, Wetlands Preserve and Freewoods Farm.⁴² All of these sections have characteristics similar to the proposed Martindale Farm.

To link the farm with local economy at the site of exchange in the city, the Main Street section offer interpretations of a small town. This is the least developed portion of Freewoods Farm at present. The goal here is to have business rent buildings constructed to the late 1800s period to help fund the project, eventually bringing about financial profit. The Main Street sector is the most problematic for the project as a whole seeming too “Disney-like” in nostalgia. The portion of land they have allotted for Main Street is too small for detailed staging and too close to the farm segment for transition. Overall, this portion will detract, not add, to the agricultural message of the farm. Here in

³⁹ Schlebecker and Peterson, *Living Historical Farms Handbook*, 10.

⁴⁰ O’Neal Smalls, interview with author at Freewoods Farm, notes, 1 January 2003.

⁴¹ Schlebecker and Peterson, *Living Historical Farms Handbook*, 5.

⁴² www.aim.deis.sc.edu

Wilmington, this is not an issue. The Martindale Farm, only five miles from the center of town, has real connections with the markets and restaurants scenario. A rural heritage experience of riding into town via horse and cart opens the Martindale project into downtown tourism, adding duality to both rural and urban historical perceptions.

The second division of Freewoods Farm is the Wetlands Preserves. Following the Civil War, land choice was constrained for minority farmers, generally African-Americans, to less than geographically ideal grounds called lowlands.⁴³ The land given to the Freewoods Farms foundation, via Skyanchor Inc., happened to be in a wetlands area.⁴⁴ This allows for additional interpretations such as 19th century methods of dealing with standing water and non-farmable sections of land. In addition, this preserve also permits additional funding sources from various land conservation groups interested in protecting natural foliage and wildlife. The land of the Martindale farm is similar to that of Freewoods farm, low lying and full of trees. A series of ditches and creeks surround the house, creating a place to demonstrate control of excessive water. A small nature preserve is possible at the Martindale site but highly unlikely due to the amount of land available to the project. The advancing urban sprawl is taking as much land as possible, leaving little viable grounds.

The centerpiece of the Freewoods Farm living history museum is the farm portion itself. This core section is the closest model for the Martindale Farm project to follow. The phase chosen for interpretation of the Freewoods Farm (1865-1900) is close to the peak period of truck farming on the Martindale Farm (1890-1916). The selection of the years for interpretation, often the hardest decision of the foundation board, delegates the

⁴³ Smalls interview, 1 January 2003.

⁴⁴ www.aim.deis.sc.edu/freewoods

type of equipment and crops required to fulfill a replication.⁴⁵ [Figure 13] This non-mechanized time selection prohibits purchases of expensive machines like tractors and combines with their exclusive use of animal power. The Martindale farm as a symbol of agriculture in New Hanover County could be the focal point for collecting antique cultivation equipment as the Freewoods Farm acquired theirs by grass roots stockpiles. Carpenters re-constructed necessary tools of the age, if they were not found.⁴⁶ The success of their efforts produced a surplus of equipment, necessitating a separate building on site for their storage. This museum within a museum opens a number of possibilities for the Martindale farm as well. It depends on the support of the community.

Freewoods farms sells products from its cultivation process for additional funding. Currently the Freewoods Farm sells cane syrup as a product from on site cultivation, milling and boiling preparation. [Figure 14] Sugar cane, raised specifically for family consumption, also grew on farms in New Hanover County such as the Martindale farm. Other products harvested from the seasonal crops are sold to the public, which are demonstrations for the Martindale farm too. With both of the farms located in low-lying areas of the coastal plains, their crops and harvests would follow similar timetables.

The largest difference between the Freewoods Farm and the Martindale farm is the featured architecture; nothing on the Freewoods Farm is indigenous to the site. Using new and old building material, most of which came from donations, the kettle shed, the granary, the barns, the smokehouse and yes, even the outhouses, did not exist on the farm before its inception. The reconstructions, accurate to the period, “allow fundamental

⁴⁵ Schlebecker and Peterson, *Living Historical Farms Handbook*, 5.

⁴⁶ Smalls interview, 1 January 2003.



a- Livestock Barn

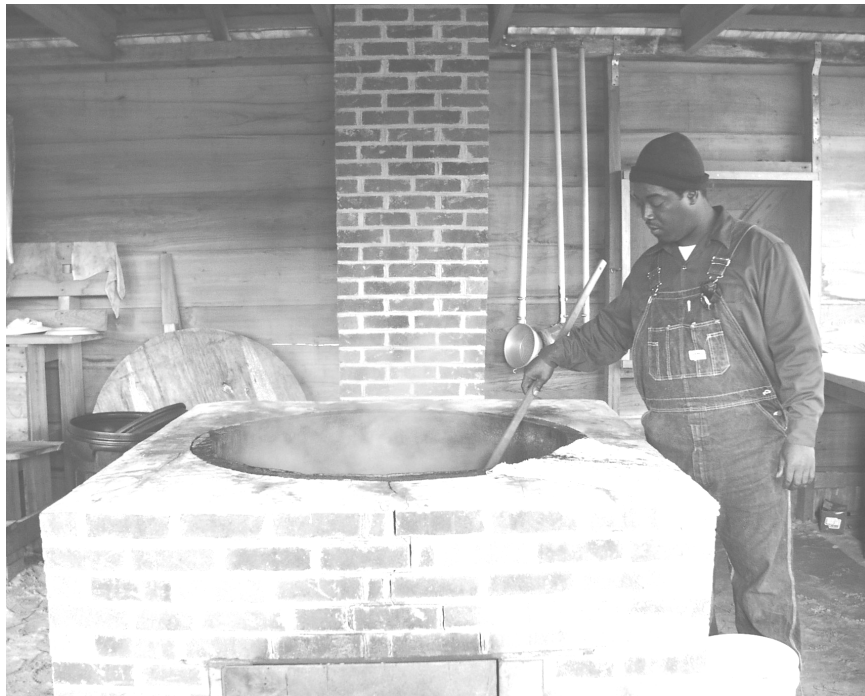


b- Vertical Siding Tobacco Barn

Figure 13. Freewoods Farm Barns (Myrtle Beach, SC 2003)



a- Sugar/Ribbon Cane Mill



b- Boiling Cane Syrup

Figure 14. Freewoods Farm Demonstration- Sugar Cane

aspects of reality to appear” for interpretation purposes.⁴⁷ The dwelling example is a 100-year-old house donated from an area farm and reconstructed on this site. [Figure 15] The Martindale farm is richer in architectural substance with a house constructed in 1823 as a truer representative of the era. Moreover, there are the excavated ruins of the “Virginia House” that could either be displayed as is or re-constructed to incorporate its interpretations. Many heritage farms are historical by association and research only, like the Freewoods Farms, whose only connection to its past is in its location near former African-American farms. This is unlike the Martindale site that holds original features in their original location. According to the *Saving America’s Countryside* manual, authenticity is important to the success of a farm museum, “...it should be based upon the resource and stories that are true to a community’s history.”⁴⁸ The Martindale Farm is an ideal candidate for a living history farm museum due to its richness of site-specific significance.

To organize a living history farm at the Martindale site requires additional research and formation of a community group. Certainly, the distant relatives of Miss Harriet Johnson would be at the forefront of a project highlighting their family’s history as well. Other farmers or relatives of past farmers may also be included in a rural preservation group. It is time for these people to ante-up with both capital and knowledge of cultivation practices. Their reparations back to the agricultural community at large are conspicuously overdue.

The project also requires the coming together of county and city civic groups for marketing purposes. The New Hanover County Commission holds links to various pass-

⁴⁷ Darwin P. Kelsey, “Historical Farms as Models of the Past,” in *a Living History Reader, Volume One*, Jay Anderson, editor, (Nashville, Tennessee, American Association for State and Local History, 1991), 76.

⁴⁸ Stokes, et al, *Saving America’s Countryside*, 267.



a.



b.

Figure 15. Freewoods Farm- a- reconstructed house, b- plowed field

through monies dispersed from state coffers like the Golden LEAF funds, which grants funds to agriculturally based non-profit groups.⁴⁹ In a time of slimming budgets, aligning a new project to compete with established ones may constrain efforts of this group. The Cape Fear Convention and Visitors Bureau, with connections back to the state Department of Cultural Resources, may be more helpful. This group focuses on area tourism and ways to promote it through festivals, conventions and holiday travel. The Martindale farm project would provide an alternative site to promote, possibly in a packaged form, along with the established area historic places. The local African-American Heritage Tourism Board could add to the project through inclusion of other oral histories, linking the minority investment with the local agricultural community through the Martindale Farm.

Regional universities and colleges bring educational aspects to the project. Through their resources in private archives, more information may come to the surface regarding coastal agriculture. The possibilities of class projects focusing on interpreting the farm gives professional experience through an internship opportunity, something lacking in the New Hanover County area. At the Freewoods Farm, students in classes at various institutions have created planning increments for the Main Street section and labeled trees in the Wetlands Preserve.⁵⁰ North Carolina State University continues to operate an agricultural experiment station in the Castle Hayne area. Their expertise would add authenticity to period accurate crop planning.

The University of North Carolina Wilmington could participate on a number of levels. With a growing interest in the field of public history, the Martindale project represents a

⁴⁹ www.goldenleaf.org Golden Leaf (Long-term Economic Advancement Foundation) created in 1999.

⁵⁰ Smalls interview, 1 January 2003.

case study in preservation to develop into curriculum over the years. Other academic departments like the Cameron School of Business (Public Administration program) and the Watson School of Education could also link classes to this project. This could lead to a connection with local public school education curriculum. Besides providing a rural place for primarily urban children to observe 19th century land use, it educates to the value of preserving the past. As preservationist William Murtagh states, "... (school systems) which teach pride of place and inculcate in the child a sense of responsibility for the local environment and its governing systems."⁵¹ The university benefits from a source of real-life experiences for the practices of theoretical lectures. The pay-off for the community is early indoctrination to preservation perceptions to the youth of the area, possibly changing the direction of conservation for the future.

This list of groups and people to involve in the Martindale preservation project is virtually endless. Not all of the options are known at the present, as links to other organizations come as the project comes to fruition. One such is the American Association of State and Local History (AASLH), established in 1904 to offer support and provide leadership for its members who interpret state and local history.⁵² Even better is the connection to the Association for Living History Farms and Museums (ALFAM) whose mission targets "service to those involved in living historical farms, agricultural museums and outdoor museums of history and folk life."⁵³ Since its foundation in 1970, this group's guidance assists new and established rural venture in preservation and interpretive methods. These are but a few examples of the many organizations dedicated to help state and local rural preservation projects. The Martindale

⁵¹ Murtagh, *Keeping Time*, 168.

⁵² www.aaslh.org American Association of State and Local History, Nashville, Tennessee, 2003.

⁵³ www.alhfam.org Association for Living History Farms and Museums, North Bloomfield, Ohio, 2003.

site holds a bountiful potential for historic interpretation. It is imperative to get public interest generated to make these connections.

As the advocate for the Martindale farm, presenting the information to achieve recognition of rural preservation becomes a key factor. Public historians, Phyllis Lefler and Joseph Brent state, “Once the research and analysis have been completed, the historian decides upon a format for presenting his findings” which is tied into both the evidence found and the projected audience.⁵⁴ For this situation, the presentation stands as the application of this paper channeled into public formats to create awareness of the property in jeopardy. Using available public modes like newspaper columns or speaking at organizational gatherings may realize the hope of changing the perception of value towards rural preservation. Continuing the research of this subject matter by pursuing additional oral histories may lead to the identification of other rural properties, which could be part of a larger agri-tourism network. Placing pressure on established preservation organizations to re-evaluate their focus to shift the paradigm towards rural is the lesser outcome of this paper. As president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Richard Moe stated, “it is the hometown preservationists doing the real work of saving America’s heritage- one building, one neighborhood, one community at a time.”⁵⁵

The Martindale Farm, identified as a historical structure, is a potential preservation site jeopardized by advancing urban sprawl. It needs public recognition, support from conservation groups as well as elevated historical designation to escape destruction. The

⁵⁴ Phyllis K. Lefler and Joseph Brent, editors, *Public History Readings*, (Malabar, Florida, Krieger Publishing Company, 1992), 481.

⁵⁵ Richard Moe, “Bringing the Preservation Message to Broader Audiences,” in *Forum Journal*, Vol. 17, no. 2, winter 2003, 8.

value of items currently preserved is biased by the cultural variations of the individual professionals. Before the public can see the need for preservation in this case, the community must accept its worth. The Martindale farm site, rich in potential yields and historical interpretations, not only adds to the diversity of local history but contributes to the tourism of the area as well. New Hanover County preservation must broaden to include rural sites and put the Martindale Farm back on the mental map of the area. To lose this valuable asset to the historic record weighs heavy on the conscience of the community.

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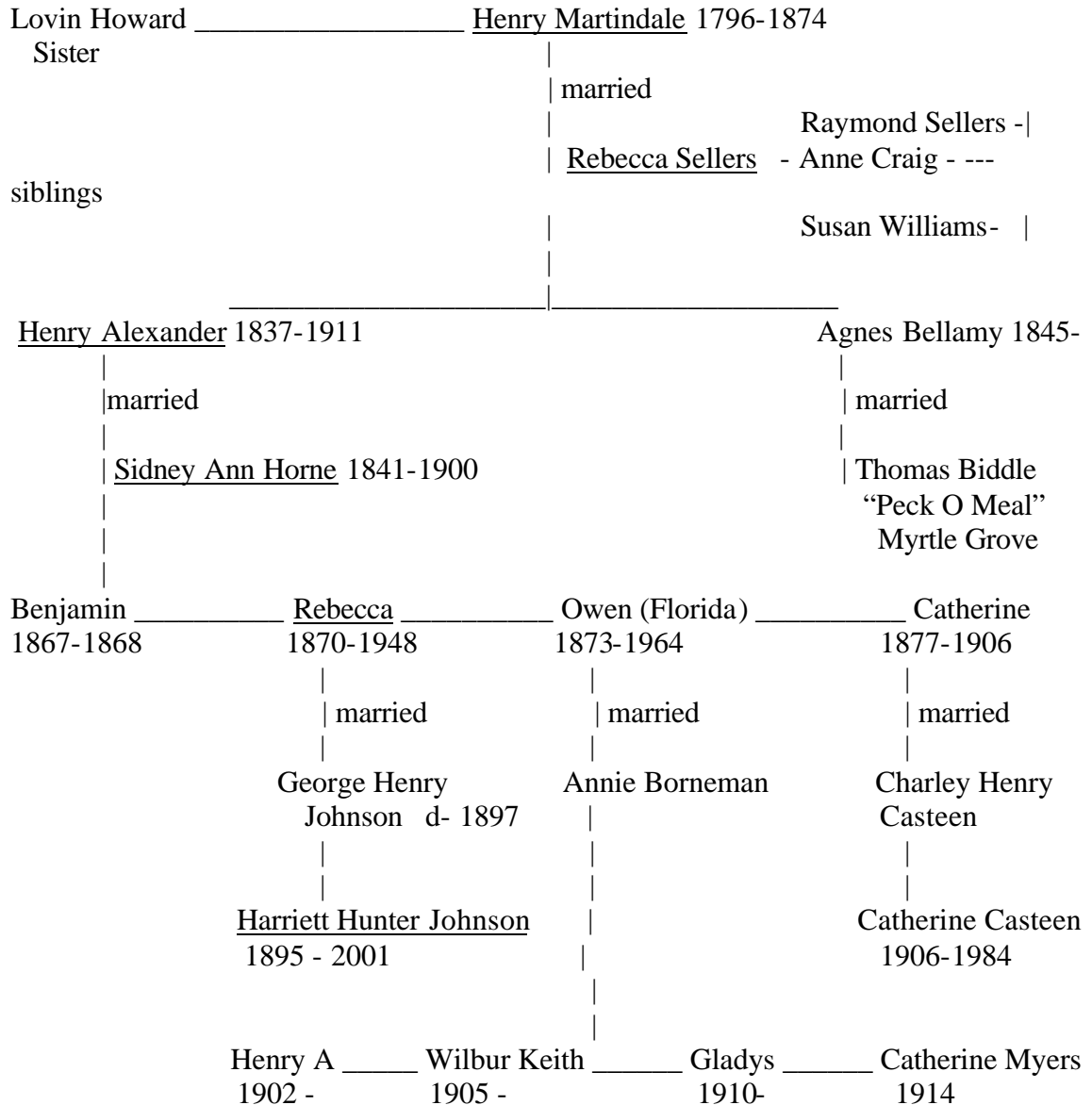
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Appendix A
Martindale Family Tree



**North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
Division of Archives and History
State Historic Preservation Office
Office of State Archaeology**

Study List Application

This application initiates preliminary consideration of a property for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. This does not mean that a property is being nominated to the Register at this time, nor does this application constitute a National Register nomination form. Rather, it enables evaluation of a property to determine if it is likely to qualify for such listing.

The evaluation takes place at the quarterly meeting of the National Register Advisory Committee (NRAC). If approved by the Committee, the property will be placed on the Study List. Applicants will be notified of the Committee's actions in writing shortly after the meeting. Once a property is approved for the Study List, a formal nomination may be prepared. For a description of the nomination and listing process, see the enclosed National Register Fact Sheet 3: "HOW HISTORIC PROPERTIES ARE LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES."

Please type, if possible, or print.

1. ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE NUMBER AND SITE NAME, IF APPLICABLE
MARTINDALE- MCGINNIS (SITE #PENDING)
2. LOCATION, INCLUDING COUNTY
WILMINGTON NC
NEW HAMPSHIRE COUNTY
3. APPROXIMATE ACREAGE
10 ACRES
4. LEGAL OWNER OF PROPERTY
Name JAMES AND GERALDINE MCGINNIS
Address 4811 CAROLINA BEACH RD
WILMINGTON NC 28412 Telephone Number 910-791-9123
5. CULTURAL AFFILIATION, TIME PERIOD AND TYPE OF SITE
HISTORIC PLANTATION LATE 18TH - EARLY 20TH C

6. PRESENT USE AND CONDITION

RESIDENTIAL, GOOD (HORSE PASTURE)

7. GENERAL STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

On an attached 8 1/2" x 11" sheet, give a short statement (one or two paragraphs) concerning the significance of the property, those characteristics of the property that make it eligible and under which National Register of Historic Places criteria.

8. SLIDES

Include at least two slides showing the present condition and/or characteristic features of the site. Slides must be labelled with the site number.

9. MAP

Include a map, preferably a section of the appropriate USGS topographic map, indicating the location and boundaries, if available, of the site under consideration.

10. BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

Is there an archaeological survey, testing, excavation or research report of investigations at the site? If so, please list the reference(s) below:

BISHOP, CATHERINE N. (ET AL) ARCHITECTS AND BUILDERS IN NORTH
THE PRESS, 1990.
HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE OF NEW NORTHERN CO., NORTH CAROLINA
N.H. CO. PLANNING DEPT. 1980.
JOHNSON, NORMAN, UNPUBLISHED ORAL HISTORIES, 2000.

WEBSITE: WWW.UNCWIL.EDU/PEOPLE/BASEDOWN/MM/HOME.HTML

11. APPLICANT OR CONTACT PERSON INFORMATION (if other than owner)

Name LULAIN MIMS

Address 117 BROOKWOOD AVE.

WILMINGTON NC 28403 Telephone Number 910-762-1906

Signature Lulain Mims Date 053101

12. This application is submitted [check one of the following]:

☐ at the request of the owner.

☒ with the owner's knowledge but not at his or her request.

☐ without the owner's knowledge.

RETURN TO: Dolores A. Hall, Archaeologist
Office of State Archaeology
State Historic Preservation Office
109 E. Jones Street 4614 MAIL SERVICE CENTER
Raleigh, NC 27601-2807 27699-4614
Telephone: 919/733-7342

**National Register Nomination
Martindale-McGinnis Property
4811 Carolina Beach Road
Wilmington, NC 28412**

The site consists of a coastal frame plantation house and approximately ten acres of surrounding property. What remains of the site is jeopardized on all sides by aggressive encroaching development. Five acres have been sold off in the last year alone, other parts of the property, deeded to relatives of the owners are presently for sale. The owners, Mr. and Mrs. J.P. McGinnis, are interested in local history and have agreed to support listing of the remaining parts of the site on the National Register.

Criteria A - Contributions to broad patterns of our history

The property was an independent farm on the outskirts of the city of Wilmington from at least the 1780's through to 1969, when the property was sold to the McGinnis family. The independent farmer, first a homesteader, later a plantation master, later still into the 20th century, a market gardener, is a consistent feature of the local historical landscape. Called Bellemeade Woods in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the property was first owned by the Newton family, prominent early settlers who ran the ferries on the Cape Fear River. In 1823 the property was purchased by Henry Martindale, who operated the then 270 acre tract as a cattle farm. Martindale owned slaves who were contracted out to build the Wilmington-Weldon railroad. The plantation seems to have been abandoned during the civil war, as many were at the time. The postwar period brought about a drastic change in the character of the plantation, which ended up being run entirely by female members of the family assisted by tenant farmers, some descended from the plantation slave families. Known in the 20th century as Johnson farms, the farmers struggled as the fruits of the lettuce boom, marking the transition from local to external market dependence, were exhausted and the rural economy became extractive, harvesting timber and collecting the native Venus Flytrap plants rather than relying on agricultural products.

Criteria C - Distinctive Characteristics of the House

The standing coastal frame house was constructed between 1825 and 1840 out of local heart pine and cypress. The original house was hall and parlor style, with a footprint of 15 x 15 ft. Later editions up until 1870, more than doubled the size of the house. Interior features include a pine floor of continuous running planks. In 1969 the current owners added a large room to the rear, attached a formerly separate shed and installed indoor plumbing and electricity. The chimney belonging to the earliest part of the house is intact. A second chimney was removed due to storm damage; its bricks were used to replace the original wooden porch. Other alterations to interior and exterior have been for the most part superficial, including, however, the replacement of the original coquina wall plaster with sheet rock and the removal of a set of pocket doors (original wall and floor slots still intact).

Criteria D - Archaeological significance

The site has been the focus of archaeological excavation conducted by the Anthropology Program at the University of North Carolina - Wilmington. Visible archaeological features include an elliptical ditch ringing the higher ground of the plantation house area from the north to the southeast. This ditch, which appears on mid-19th century maps of the area, was excavated in two areas, proving, as expected, to contain rubbish from the use period of the house. Although not bottomed this season, the earliest ceramic assemblage is 1780-1820 in date, suggesting that the house itself may be older than suspected or that it covers the site of a still earlier building. Remains of a likely garden wall were also found in this area. Oral history located two slave cabin sites, one of which was partially excavated in an overgrown area some 200 feet southwest of the plantation house. The slave cabin building, later used by tenant farmers, was represented by a brick double chimney with ballast stone and coral foundations. Postholes and wall slot stains indicated a long narrow earthfast building of the type referred to as the Virginia house. The midden areas here were underneath what would have been a raised floor and an extensive area to the east of the structure. An animal burial (species identification pending) was found in a small pit near the southern end of the building, possibly the site of a window or door. These have been found at slave cabin sites elsewhere and have been interpreted as apotropaic. Other parts of the site beg investigation. As plumbing was not installed on the farm until 1969, nearly 200 years of sequential privy deposits can be expected in the area behind the plantation house, where there are also indications of several cisterns and well pits. Other early outbuildings and archaeological structures known to have existed on the property include stables, a mill and a slave cemetery. Native American artifacts are also to be expected. The archaeological potential of this site, particularly when one considers that it is the only one of its kind remaining in the county, is unparalleled within the region.

Appendix C. National Register of Historic Places Study List Acceptance



North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

State Historic Preservation Office

David L. S. Brook, Administrator

Michael F. Easley, Governor
Lisbeth C. Evans, Secretary

Division of Archives and History
Jeffrey J. Crow, Director

July 24, 2001

James and Geraldine McGinnis
4811 Carolina Beach Road
Wilmington, North Carolina 28412

RE: Martindale-McGinnis Site, Wilmington, New Hanover County

Dear James and Geraldine:

At the request of LuAnn Mims, the above-referenced property was presented to the North Carolina National Register Advisory Committee (NRAC) at its meeting in Raleigh on June 14, 2001, for a preliminary assessment of the property's eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The NRAC is a board of professionals and citizens with expertise in history, architectural history, and archaeology, and meets three times a year to advise me on the eligibility of properties for the National Register and the adequacy of nominations.

The committee determined that this property is potentially eligible for the National Register and warrants further study. Accordingly, the property has been added to the Study List of potential nominations to the National Register. Placement on the Study List is the first step in the National Register listing process. Please note that placement on the Study List does not mean automatic nomination to the National Register. You must initiate the next step, preparation of the nomination. The enclosed set of *National Register Fact Sheets* briefly explains the nomination and listing process.

If you wish to have your property nominated, we can provide a list of qualified private consultants with whom you may contract to prepare the nomination. Our staff will advise property owners who wish to prepare their own nominations, but because of the complexity of technical requirements and standards of documentation, most nominations

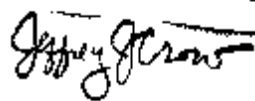
	Location	Mailing Address	Telephone/Fax
ADMINISTRATION	507 N. Blount St., Raleigh NC	4612 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699-4612	(919) 733-4763 • 733-8653
RESTORATION	515 N. Blount St., Raleigh NC	4613 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699-4613	(919) 733-6542 • 715-4801
SURVEY & PLANNING	515 N. Blount St., Raleigh NC	4618 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699-4618	(919) 733-6543 • 715-4801

are prepared by historians or architectural historians experienced in the nomination process. When a technically complete and adequately documented nomination is submitted to this office, staff can provide timely review and processing. However, we cannot rewrite or make substantial revisions to inadequate nominations or provide in-depth historical research services.

Listing in the National Register is largely an honorary designation that can also generate substantial benefits for the property owner. It provides a measure of protection from any state or federally funded or licensed project that might affect the property. In addition, the Tax Reform Act of 1986 provides for a federal income tax credit of twenty percent for the rehabilitation of income-producing properties (commercial or residential rental) that are listed in the National Register. Also, effective January 1998, taxpayers that receive the federal income tax credit are allowed to take a twenty percent credit against North Carolina income taxes. Likewise, a state tax credit of thirty percent of the cost of qualifying rehabilitation offers aid to owners of non-income-producing historic structures. Please note that National Register listing does not restrict a private owner's use of his or her property.

Please let us know if the ownership of the property changes, if it is moved, or if it is altered in any significant way. If you have questions about the National Register program, please contact Ms. Ann Swallow, National Register Coordinator, Survey and Planning Branch, State Historic Preservation Office, 4618 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-4618, 919.733.6545.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey J. Crow
State Historic Preservation Officer

JJC/jct

enclosures

cc: LuAnn Mims

Appendix D. Oral History with Harriett Hunter Johnson
Bell Meade Woods

Oral interview conducted by LuAnn Mims on March 20, 2000, at Miss Johnson's residence on Silva Terra Drive. Miss Johnson's friend and aide entered the house near the end of the thirty-minute conversation.

LuAnn (LA) - What do you remember about your grandfather? I know you moved over to the house when you were a small child. What memory do you have of him?

Harriett Johnson (HJ) – Ha, Ha – Well, I don't know, it would take a book to hold 'em probably, if I was to remember 'em. Ha, Ha –

LA- He stayed busy farming?

HJ- He was a great farmer. He was said to be the "King Watermelon Farmer" of the county. He used to raise watermelons.

LA- Do you remember his watermelons?

HJ- Ma'am?

LA – Do you remember his watermelons? Did they taste good?

HJ – Yes ma'am, I do! I remember them well. They were great big things like this. (Makes a hand gesture showing about 18-24 inches).

HJ – He raised them and he would make two trips to town a day, carrying watermelons to sell them. And I remember one Fourth of July, I remember him saying it, he said, "I carried two watermelons to market today when I went and I got a half a dollar for 'em."

LA- That's not very much, is it?

HJ- He meant a half a dollar a piece. Ha, ha, fair money.

LA- What else did he sell at town?

HJ- Well, he sold sweet potatoes, along, mostly watermelons. And he sold collards, cabbage, most anything that he could raised on a farm then.

LA- Who helped him on the farm?

HJ- He had colored people to help him.

LA- Did you get to know any of them?

HJ- I knew most of them, they are all dead and gone. Ha, Ha. One of them granddaughters and us have been great friends, her name is Lilly Lennon. This is kind of getting away from this. One of the neighbors over there one day said, "Did you know Lilly Lennon was dead?" I said, "No, I didn't know Lilly was dead." (She said) "Well, I did see her in a rest home." I said, "You are mistaken, you didn't see her in a rest home." Well, she stood me down she did, but I knew then that she didn't. Well, when she told me Lilly was dead, Mr. McGinnis came over here and I asked him if he'd read the article in the paper. Well, he read it to me and it was Lilly, I thought he said Lilly Lennon, but he was really saying Lillian. And they both lived close together and they were sister-in-laws. And so I get busy and all and order flowers from Rita to send to the funeral. If I had been able I would have gone to the funeral, thinking, ha, ha, as I was. Then ten days after that somebody said they saw Lilly and was talking to her. They said Lilly is not dead. And I said, "Well I sent some flowers to her funeral." And then one Sunday about three weeks ago she called me. We call each other and talk to one another real often. She said, "This is Lilly Lennon" and I said, "I thought you was dead!" She said, "Well I'm not, I am very much alive." We have talked to one another since then.

LA- Tell me about your mother, what did she do on the farm? Did she work in the house or did she work outside?

HJ- She did all of it. She worked in the house. Oh, you mustn't have no dirt here and there, and yonder. I mean she was terribly particular. She usually had a butter bean patch. That was her very own, what she got out of that was hers. And she had her lettuce, when they were raising lettuce at that time. She had her lettuce. And that is the way she got her buggy. That was one of the ways. And she had chickens and eggs, that was her money. She would get out there in the field, she'd help him gather the watermelons out in the field. I remember seeing her do that.

LA- Did you tag along with her as a child?

HJ- No, they made me stay at the house they didn't want me out there in that sun. I stayed at the house.

LA- What did you do in the house as a child?

HJ- Played with my doll babies.

LA- So you had a lot of dolls?

HJ- I did, I had a lot of dolls. I would play with my cats and my dolls.

LA- How about friends, who would you play with for a companion?

HJ- Well, I had a little Horne girl. She and I were about the same age. And I had some cousins that would go over there. Some of these colored people had children and we'd play together.

LA- So you remember visiting other people at their houses, as well? How did you get there?

HJ- Horse and cart. We didn't have a buggy then, part of the time. Then after awhile of course, after she sold her lettuce, she got her buggy. Ha, ha. I would sit on that horse. He was certainly a pretty, we all were crazy over that horse.

LA- What was his name?

HJ- Bob. Grandpa Martindale said, "He acts so much like a Bob and looks like a Bob, we'll call him Bob." I remember just when we first got him. Grandpa liked to ride horseback and he would ride that horse. He'd say sometimes, "Becky if you have a hold of dinner, think I go down to Masonboro and see some of those older people down there, Mr. Hewlett and Mr. Wagner", all War people, they were in the service together. (Civil War). And there would be some body else, some place or the other, he'd visit 'em all on horseback. And he would ride the horse through the woods and around to look over things. At some point, he went to see his son, over here, its on the other side, the property adjoined Echo Farms over here. He had a big farm over there, his son did. He went over there one time and that horse untied himself. If he didn't tie him a certain way, he would untie himself. He could do it just as good as you could. So when he went out to come home and the old horse was gone. Well, we got out there and began to look for him and the old horse was coming back. Grandpa Martindale says, I think he started home and got scared, so he come back.

LA- Were the roads made out of dirt?

HJ- Just old wood roads.

LA- Wood, shells or anything on them?

HJ- Not a thing on them. Roads were like this road out here. (Points to her dirt and pine straw driveway)

LA- What stores would you guys go to, or did the supplies come to you?

HJ – They went to town. When Grandpa Martindale would take a load of watermelons to town and somebody else kept the store where they had bought the watermelons. He had nothing else he wanted to buy, but he wanted to buy something from them because they had bought the watermelons from him or

whatever he was selling. So he'd buy rice. He said that was something that would keep. He would buy things like that and bring them home. And then when he would be going to town with his crop like that, whatever we lacked like flour or meal, or anything like that, mama would write it down and he would get it.

LA- You guys didn't go in to town with him?

HJ- I didn't go with him. He went by himself.

LA – Do you remember going into town at all? (Wilmington)

HJ – Oh yea, that was a great treat!

LA – What did you get to do when you went there?

HJ – Well, Mama would go in there and buy our clothes, she'd buy cloth. She'd buy a lot of cloth, and then she'd come home and make our clothes.

LA – Do you remember what store she would go to?

HJ – Well, one of them was S & B Solomon's and one is named Paultz (Polgvotz) Store. Another big store down there they called it the "Racket Store." It eventually was the beginning of Belk Store. The Racket Store was Gaylord's Store. I don't remember when it was the Racket Store but I remember when Gaylord got it.

LA – Do you remember any of the candy shops downtown?

HJ – Don't really do. I know they were there but that's all. Mama never went to courthouse in her life until Grandfather died and she was the administrator.

LA- And had to take care of his estate. Do you remember going to town with her or did she do all of that on her own?

HJ – She went with her brother (Owen), I stayed home.

LA – What school did you go to as a child?

HJ – There was a little school out in the woods between (Hwy) 132 and Masonboro Road. Right over here, right in the woods over there. (To the left of the property towards the Sound)

LA – What did they call the school?

HJ – Myrtle Grove. Myrtle Grove School. A one-room schoolhouse. One teacher. About twenty-five children. (Boys and Girls). In grades first, second and third. I

remember the first year I ever went, down at the school. There was three of us, three little girls. One of 'em was Annie Horne, one was Lottie Fergus and the other was me! We all three of us was such little fellows, they put us all in one seat. Our legs were so short they wouldn't even touch the floor. That was the way we were.

LA- About how old were you then?

HJ – I was six or seven years old. Annie thought she had a pain in her side, we never thought she had any and the teacher would sit there and hold her in her lap for a while.

LA- Is that the school you graduated from? How long did you go to that school?

HJ – I went to that school until I was, there was two years I didn't go there. They had a teacher down there I didn't like and they didn't like me to go to her, so I went to a school over there in South Wilmington. They called it South Wilmington School, so I went over there.

LA – Was that a girl's school or a mixed school?

HJ – It was just a country graded school. My grandfather would take me to school every day and come back and get me in the evening. That's the way that was. The year my grandfather died (1911), I was about fifteen years old. I was still was going to the country school, we bought a horse, for me. I rode horseback over there to school, the last year I went to school. I was just about fifteen.

LA- What was your favorite subject?

HJ – I don't know, ha, ha. I simply was not interested in history and I never did get interested in history until I was about twenty, then I kind of got wrapped-up in it. Ha, ha.

LA – Did you continue your education as you got older?

HJ – No ma'am, I didn't have anyway to go, to school, then in the meantime my grandfather died and my mother would have been over there by herself.

LA – So you helped your mom around the farm? What were some of your chores at the time?

HJ – Well, I don't know there was quite a few of 'em. We had several horses, one time or another and I remember when the horses died. That was some experience losing those horses like we did. When the horses got sick, I remember drenching the horses. I did everything there was to do just about.

LA – Did you guys still have help on the farm then at that time or was it just you and your mom? Who else was helping you with the farm?

HJ – Some of the same families of colored people. Miss Lilly, I was telling you about, her grandmother was my mother's nurse when she was a baby. (Her name was) Jul-Ann. So when I call, I would call her Aunt Forth of July. Aunt July is what we called her, everybody called her that, so I was little and that is what I called her. Miss Lilly I was telling you about was her grand daughter. It was a colored man; I don't know where he got his money to buy this land. He owned a lot of land over here, where Monkey Junction is, on the other side of the road, to the River. He owned a lot of land over in there. He had three, four boys and the boys were the same ages as my uncle and the Trask boys and the Horne boys. So they were a family that was always together, this colored family. Miss Lilly's father was one of those around, except Lilly's father worked for us then. I was over in Dr. Fales' office one day and we all was sitting there, sat there, and sat there and sat there. I knew Levi was there because he had gone to the wrong door and I got up and turned him in. I told the patients in the there, there's not a thing in the world that Dr. Fales is doing except talking to that colored man, its not a thing else. He leave us waiting for long, so when my turn comes to go in there after Levi left, he said, "Did you know Levi?" I said, "Yes, I know him and when he quits, Harriett and Catherine are gonna quit", and we did.

LA – What kinds of food did you eat, you ate the produce from the farm?

HJ – We had our patch of vegetables that grew on the farm and we lived off the farm. We had hogs and the milk and the butter, chickens and eggs, and turkeys. They raised a lot of turkeys. I just do remember raising the turkeys.

LA- How did everything stay fresh without electricity?

HJ – Didn't do it. We cooked enough that day and tried to eat it all that day. We couldn't keep it.

LA – When did electricity come to Bell Meade?

HJ – We never did have any electricity over there, ever, until the McGinnis's put it in there. (1969). I think it was around, 1963, something like that, is when they got it.

LA- So the whole time you lived there, you had no electricity?

HJ – No. We had gas. We had gas cook stove and we had gas heat, some of it. We had a gas refrigerator. It was as good as that one in there, just about. (Points to kitchen). (Everything ran off gas) Yea, we had a wood stove to cook on. Then we got a gas stove to cook on. We had both a gas stove and a wood stove.

LA – Who did most of the cooking at the house?

HJ – Whichever one got in the kitchen, ha ha. Mama did most of it, but I didn't like to cook. Once mama died, in '48, until then her and Catherine battled, over anything. After we got along in later years instead of hiring someone to do the farm, we would rent it. Somebody would come and rent this piece of ground and plant corn in it or something. Another piece over there they would plant corn in it.

LA- How much did you rent the property for?

HJ – Well sometimes, we'd always tell them, "you plant that crop over there, don't forget we're going to eat out of it."

LA – Sometimes you would just get part of the crop?

HJ – Not much. They'd sell it and give us cash for it. (This was in) the '50 and '60s.

LA – You and your cousin, Catherine lived on the farm a number of years, just the two of you?

HJ – Yes, until 1960, I don't know I would have to look it up and see the time. I believe it was '82 when Catherine died. (1984) We had lots of grapes over there. They were Scuppernong, the black and the white types. We had several vines of them. We would charge people so much money to eat the grapes, off the vine. Then if they carried any home with them, we would charge them extra for what they carried home with them. Then we would take orders to pick a bushel, something like that. In that way, a few times, was the way we would pay our taxes, is with grapevines.

LA- You also had the house open for visitations, did you charge an admission fee for that?

HJ – Yea, we would charge an admission to go in there but with having the grapes and then the open house, raising flowers and all of it. Catherine's feet, were the worst looking feet you ever saw in your life, they were deformed. She got to where she couldn't do the work and I was getting where I couldn't either, so we give it up.

LA- You guys raised the flowers there? What type of flowers did you have?

HJ – We grew everything, if you want to know. This colored man I was telling you about, he was out there helping us [Mae, the nurse enters room]. This colored man was the one that would do the heavy work and the hard work. (His name is) Levi MacDonald.

LA- What kind of flowers? The cactus?

HJ – We had sold pot flowers, and had some pot flowers were rare. And then we had flowers growing in the field. We had zinnias, and marigolds, and flowers like that. We would cut those and carry them to a store, named “Grocerteria”, and they would sell the flowers for us. (Wilmington) This was on Market Street, between Front and Second. They had a big grocery store there. That was where most people went to go get their groceries. Catherine had a whole lot of customers, she would take them and go around and sell them. Then people would go over there (Bell Meade) and buy flowers. They’d buy grapes and they’d buy flowers. Before mama died, I kind of got out in the nursing field as a practical nurse. I was working at a place one time and they got a terrarium from the mountains. They had the small plants from the mountains in that terrarium. I said to myself, “Harriett and Catherine can do that and we’ll put flytraps in ‘em.” And when we put the flytraps in ‘em, most anybody would buy ‘em to get the flytraps. So we got into that. I said to Catherine one day, mama was living then, mama says “Catherine”, she says, “if I was you I would take one of them little bowls that she fixed around to some of your customers in some of the stores and maybe they would like to see them.” Well, she did. If any mortal in this world ever worked in the world, we did that year! We had to gather those plants. They grow wild on the tract of land we had. We’d gather them and put them in those bowls, fish bowls, any kind of bowl. There was a little Venus trap in here, and pitcher plants, they were in there too. And sun dews and there was a little red berry that grew in the woods, called “turkey berries”. And we would put those around in there and they were, even if I did think so, very attractive! They wanted them for Christmas. And we sold them, we bought every fish bowl there was in Wilmington. Ha ha. That was one of our ways of doing. We were left, my mother was left, with right much land around in here. Well, we sold the timber that was one the land, the large, we didn’t sell the small for pulp timber, we didn’t sell it. We would sell the timber and the timber people would come in and get the timber, and then when they’d get the timber they’d leave the tops of the trees. Then we’d sell the tops of the trees to the people who wanted wood. That was one of our ways of getting by. And then as time went on, the whole place was full of flytraps, now this sounds like a story, but we got the flytraps off the place. We got, I think practically all of them. They grew out in the yard here. So we gathered all the flytraps, to fill those orders, and we sold ‘em all over the United States, you might say. We sent some to Italy. We were in the flytrap business! Somebody would want a terrarium so we were busy with that and we finally got just about all the flytraps we had, on the place. And we had sold all the timber, except the pulp timber. Well, the flytrap business was about over with us, but as I said these colored people had land over there. Levi, had a mule and a wagon, so he got to the place he knew how to get the traps and he did get them. We got a big order for a hundred, or something like that, we’d pay him to sell us the traps and then we would sell ours. We’d sell ‘em! We’d sell ‘em! One day I said,

Levi, I said, "this is our tax money." He says, "Miss Harriett, I tells you its mine too."

LA- How many acres did you have at that time?

HJ – About 150, or something like that. Well after we sold all our timber off of it, the last trees. We said we'd be hungry if we sold the pulp timber and we would not sell the pulp timber. The pulp people, they was just as ugly as they could be, they go around the road and see if anybody having pulp timber, they would throw a match in there. Most everyone around at this particular time, lost all their timber. If they didn't sell it right now, before it was too dead, you could sell it. But, if you didn't it was lost. It was nothing for to ride up and down these roads in here and see where they had burned the timber. We had a terrible fire in here and the devil got into me, of course. I saw the fire come in here the first of the week and by Friday or Saturday, here they come, said they wanted to know if I would sell them the pulp timber. I said, "Yes, you come through here and you set the woods afire and you then you want to get the pulp timber." I said, "No ma'am, you will not get it, we're not gonna let you have it." (They said) "Well, you're gonna lose it." I said, "We don't care if we do, I won't let you have it." I don't know how many people come and we wouldn't let them have it but we had a friend out here at Monkey Junction that was taking care of the timber back then. So he called me and offered us a good price for it and we made good on that. He sold it for me, got it and sold it for us.

LA- What year was that?

HJ – I don't know, probably about ten years before we moved, in the 50s. My mama died in that time. We paid the taxes out of it. One time while mama was living, we had to put a roof on that house over there, out of the timber. After we sold everything there was on the land that she could get anything good out of, then our money would kind of give out, somebody would come along and want a little piece of land and we would let them have it. And we would live on that. It has been a battle, but I've lived through it.

LA – You have, successfully!

HJ – Ha, Ha!

Appendix E. Martindale Excavation Finds

EXCERPTS FROM WEBSITE

Last updated 6/01 by Maureen Basedow

The finds from the site are still being processed, conserved and photographed. This is a preliminary summary of the results. There is already a page up on the [clay pipes](#) from the site. Other pages illustrating the ceramics, glass, metal and other finds will follow.

Chronology

The earliest ceramic assemblage from the site dates 1780-1820. The material represented is very similar to what Stanley South associated with what he referred to as the "post-revolutionary" occupation of nearby Brunswick Town. Another good parallel for the earliest assemblage comes from the site of Stratford Hall in Maryland. There is also a good selection of small finds from MM that fall within this range.

An assemblage is a regularly re-occurring association of objects. One piece of pottery will not date a site or its phases; the presence of an assemblage is much more reliable. We found this earliest assemblage at both the ditch site associated with the plantation house and in the slave cabin middens. Construction-related deposits from the slave cabin area produced a few sherds of material that could be earlier. It may be that there is an older midden somewhere waiting to be excavated. The cabin may be an earlier building. It may be that these few pieces represent older heirlooms whose actual "use period" at the site was later.

The date of the ceramics is, you may recall, earlier than the supposed date for the construction of the plantation house. It is unmistakable evidence that there was an earlier building somewhere on the property - for which there is also some documentary evidence. This "earlier building" may be the house itself or a demolished structure on the same site.

The finds and oral historical evidence compared

We found later ceramics for all other periods of the sites occupation with one exception -- there is nothing from the site that must date from the late 1850's through to the mid-to-late 1860's. This is the period of the civil war. Despite oral tradition communicated by Miss Johnson about the Martindale women keeping the plantation going during the war and hiding out at each others houses as the enemy approached, we have no solid evidence that anyone lived in the plantation house during this period. The evidence from the glass remains complements the ceramics and adds a few new details. There is a dearth of glass from the period with one exception - the slave cabin site has a number of [cheap beer](#) and whiskey flasks from

dating very specifically to this time. Up to now, while the plantation midden showed that the owners drank fine wines and had a good stock of medicinal brandies, there has been no evidence of alcohol use at the slave cabin site. The picture that emerges is the family departing and either leaving the plantation to the care one or more otherwise less than reputable (or simply economically challenged) caretakers (who were given the slave cabin as lodging) or that squatters moved in after the family was gone.

If the family left the plantation they would have taken their fine sets of dishes and potions in glass bottles and slaves with them. There are contemporary newspaper accounts attesting to this movement of families away from the coast to more secure inland sites. Located as it was on the major thoroughfare between the bastion of Fort Fisher and the important city of Wilmington, the residents in this area may have felt themselves particularly vulnerable. Fleeing not being as fashionable or heroic an excuse in later periods, this aspect of the war years became subsumed into comfortable myths of heroic wives and daughters - as heroic, as Miss Johnson and her female relatives managing the farm later on actually were.

This is all pending further investigation. It is not impossible that a quantity of material from this period may emerge elsewhere on the site.

Social distinctions and distributions

The pre-Civil war material from the site, particularly for the period immediately after the property was purchased by Martindale, is of high quality. It would have been expensive. The remains of fine sets of imported dinnerware, tea equipment and fancy glass liquor decanters are common. After the lacunae of the Civil War period there is a steady decline in quality leading up to a strictly utilitarian late 19th and early 20th century assemblage dominated by plain, inexpensive kitchenwares and stoneware storage vessels. The glass bottles decline from decorative [scroll flasks](#) to linement and [patent medicine flasks](#). One interesting feature of the latest assemblages are the remains of Miss Johnson's [flowerpots](#) -- she made extra money for her land taxes by growing flowers for sale and by collecting and selling the native venus flytraps from the woods.

This decline in fortunes, with occasional upswings, as when Mrs. Johnson's mother could afford to buy a carriage with profits from the early twentieth century "lettuce boom", is thus attested by both the documentary (parts of the plantation were regularly sold off), oral historical and archaeological record. We even found parts of Mrs. Johnson's mothers carriage - the cabin site, a virtual ruin by that time, having been used to store tack during the pre-automobile 20th century.

Also interesting is a comparison of the finds between the plantation house midden in the ditch area and comparable areas associated with the slave/tenant cabin. Both have a good range of fine ceramics; some of the [cabin pieces](#) are actually preserved in better condition than those from the plantation house area because they come

from a midden area that was underneath the cabin -- therefore not walked around on or exposed to surface weathering. The presence of fine ceramics and glass is not unusual at cabin sites. Useful objects such as these would be recycled as slave and servant equipment, presumably after they had been damaged, or simply gone out of style.

More indicative of the enormous social gulf are the absence of clay pipes from the slave cabin site (see the [pipes](#) page for more on this), the absence of alcohol containers and, interestingly, the absence of shoe parts. The plantation house midden produced shoe buttons, buckles, hobnails, metal toe and heel reinforcements and other footwear-related material regularly. We have none of these items from the slave/tenant cabin area. It is quite possible that they simply didn't have shoes. Shoes were a luxury item for the rural poor in North Carolina up until the mid-20th century. It does not look like the slaves or the late 19th century tenant farmers who were in part, according to Mrs. Johnson, their descendants had access to durable footwear. It is also possible that the cobbling that might have produced the type of deposit mentioned above simply took place at one specialized location near the plantation house.

The bone remains continue to illustrate the dichotomy between the two areas. Although very few bones were found in this year's excavation there are cattle and pig bones, in other words, domesticated animal remains, from the plantation midden. In contrast, the slave/tenant cabin midden produced a majority of wild species, including turtle and wild turkey. Slaves and tenants were commonly allowed to hunt and trap to supplement their diets. Further excavation would show just how restricted they were otherwise from the animal products produced on the site. In addition, the plantation house midden produced a majority of oyster shell; the slave cabin site had a clam majority.

Other interesting finds

Among the other interesting finds from the site are English [gunflints](#). The small trench in the ditch area also produced evidence that these flints were being manufactured there, chipped and fire-cracked from large imported flint nodules from southern England. Other early imports are a brass English-style [stirrup](#) and a small denomination coin issued by the British East India company in 1788. 18th century America was always in need of small change and the currencies of many countries and entities would circulate without any direct connection to their source indicated.

Daily life implements include a large selection of tools, horse equipment, a knife handle, [medicine and perfume bottles](#), [clothing buttons](#) and children's [toys](#). The slave/tenant cabin site produced several clay marbles.

An unusual [animal burial](#) was found associated with the slave cabin site - see the cabin page for more information.

Martindale Excavation Pipe Finds

Last updated 6/01 by Maureen Basedow

In the 17th, 18th and early 19th century, tobacco was smoked in clay pipes. These were inexpensive and correspondingly fragile, leading to their frequent discard and subsequent presence in archaeological deposits. What you see below are some of the

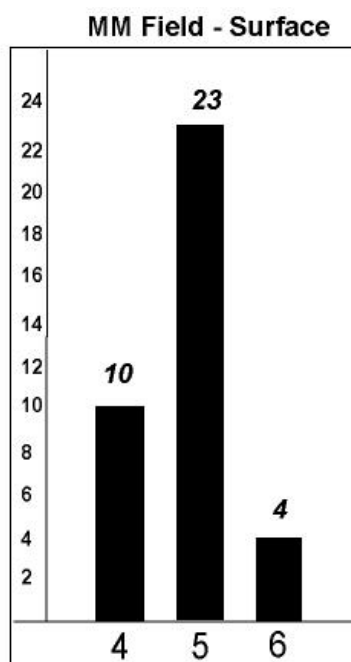
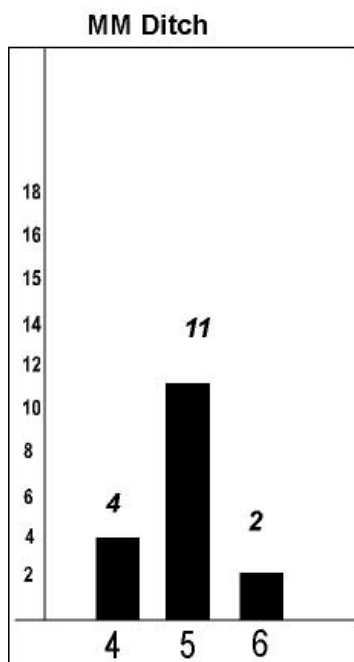


pipe bowl and stem fragments, all found in the ditch area of the site.

In addition to being common, the pipes are chronologically diagnostic. This means they provide good dating evidence. The stem fragments are more common than the bowls, and much attention has been focused on them. The general theory is that the holes piercing the pipe stems become smaller over time.

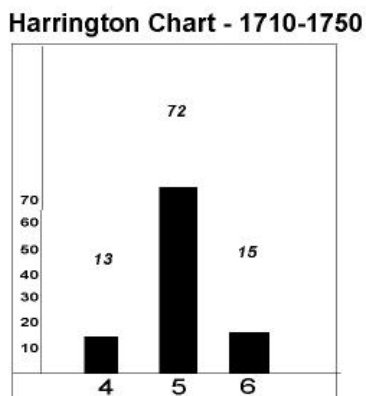
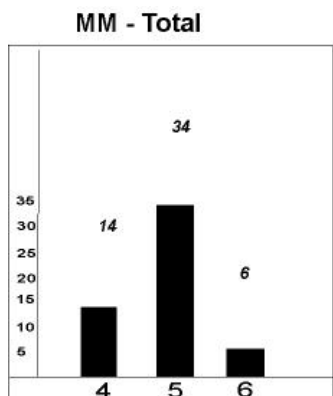
The diameter of these holes can be measured using drill bits, calibrated to the 64th of an inch in America and to millimeters in the rest of the world. Although there are several useful ways to quantify and analyze this data, we will limit ourselves here to one of these, measuring the stem diameters and comparing them to bar graphs describing the general trends for different blocks of time. We can call these "Harrington charts", after their inventor. Repeated studies have shown the trends to be generally true. This means that a range of dates can be reliably determined using this method, rather than, for example, dating as precisely as to a single calendar year.





Here are charts for the two groups of pipes from the site. The vertical axis is number of pipe fragments, the horizontal axis is hole diameter in 64ths of an inch. Those from MM Ditch were excavated this year. Those from MM Field were collected over the years by the property owners, some from the ditch area, others from a field further to the west, all from the surface. Though

similar, the MM Field group has a slightly later tendency, recognizable in the higher overall number of pipes with a 4/64s diameter and the lower relative proportion of 6/64th diameter stems compared to the other sizes.



Because our overall numbers, reflective of the small area excavated so far, are too low for robust conclusions (or any of the more statistics-based analysis techniques) we combined the pipe data from the two groups into MM-Total before comparing

it with the Harrington charts. (Note that these two graphs are at different scale than each other and the first two graphs to compensate for the different overall numbers). Our results most resemble the chart for the years 1710-1750, with MM-Total showing a slightly later tendency again with the shift toward the 4/64th diameter stems, a shift more noticeable when one considers the relationships proportionately. Approximately one in four pipes from MM 4- total has a diameter of 4/64ths. Only about one in ten of the range on the Harrington chart have holes that small. Still, the Harrington chart for the next date range, 1750 - 1800, shows an overwhelming dominance of the 4/64th variety - which we clearly don't have here with MM-total. Irrespective of other chronological data, and pending the excavation of a larger pipe database, we might put our pipes toward the end of the earlier sequence and beginning of the next, say 1760-1770 or maybe a little later.

The pipe bowls can be another chronological indicator. Decorated bowls - and nearly every pipe bowl from MM is decorated - are a late 18th, early 19th century phenomenon. [Stems](#) can be decorated too in this period. Because there was so much variety in pipe decoration, the typology is much less strict. The [ribbed](#) bowls can date 1780-1830 or so, with the larger ones later. The bowl with the [Eagle](#) decoration may relate to Eagle tobacco of Virginia, a brand in place with pipes advertising it as of 1819. The [scalloped](#) example also falls into this range. The simpler, smaller pipes with rim decoration could be earlier than these. All the pipes illustrated at the beginning of this paper are from this year's excavation. Some of the pipe bowls from the MM-Field collection (not illustrated) are decidedly later, with fine floral decoration, going as late as 1850. This is in line with the overall later tendency of the finds from that area. The midden there, further away from the house as it is, may be a later deposition than the discards in the ditch.

The data from the pipe finds needs to be considered in the context of the rest of the dating evidence from the site, for example, the ceramics. Other bits of information in addition to dates can also come from small finds distributions. One of the most striking from this season's excavation was the complete lack of pipe finds from the cabin trenches. All the pipe fragments came from middens associated with the plantation house. Neither the slaves, nor the later tenant farmers who occupied the cabin seem to have smoked tobacco in pipes. While they may have smoked rolled tobacco, or chewed or sniffed snuff, the lack of pipe fragments is unusual in deposits of this date. While the delicate pipes were not themselves expensive, the leisure time to sit and smoke tobacco in these small-bowled, maintenance-heavy instruments - they would have required constant refilling, tamping and relighting - may well have been fit, as it seems, only for the master. Pipes are known from other slave cabin sites in the southeast - we just don't seem to have them here. This may tell us a bit about the conditions for slaves on a mid-sized coastal Carolina plantation but there is not enough data from other sites in the region for us to apply the information to more than this specific site.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

LuAnn Margaret Mims was born on 4 April 1957 in Coffeyville, Kansas to John and Monnie Mims. Two years later, her father transferred to a job in California in the San Jose area. She remained there until 1968 when General Electric, the company her father worked for, sent the family to Wilmington, North Carolina. LuAnn attended local schools and graduated from John T. Hoggard High School in 1975. After a brief semester at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina, she transferred to the University of North Carolina, Wilmington where she received a BA in history in 1981. She also completed the educational program for state certification in social studies at the secondary level.

Following graduation LuAnn left Wilmington and lived in various other states such as Alabama, California and Florida. With her immediate family permanently planted in Wilmington, she returned in 1996 to be closer to them. To renew her teaching certification she began taking required courses at UNC-Wilmington. At the urging of one of her professors, Dr. Frank Ainsley, she enrolled in the public history graduate program there in 1999. Under the tutelage of Dr. Virginia Stewart, she broadened her interest in local history to reach a larger audience. LuAnn received her MA in public history in the spring of 2003. She is a member of the *Phi Alpha Theta* honor society, American Association for State and Local History, the Oral History Association, and the Association for Living History, Farm and Agricultural Museums.

LuAnn currently lives in Wilmington with her husband, Allen Randall, and daughters Corey, Molly and Siobhán.