

# Survey and Research Report on the J. Leonard Cashion Farm



10500 Eastfield Road

- 1. Name and location of the property:** The property known as the J. Leonard Cashion Farm is located 10500 Eastfield Road.
- 2. Name and address of the current owner(s) of the property:**  
John K. Maxwell  
3141 Butter Churn Lane  
Matthews, NC 28105  
704-321-3380
- 3. Representative photographs of the property:** This report contains representative photographs of the property.
- 4. A map depicting the location of the property:** This report contains a map depicting the location of the property.



**5. Current deed book reference to the property:** The most recent deed to the J. Leonard Cashion Farm can be found in Mecklenburg County Deed Book 14185 Page 592. The Tax Identification Number for the property is 027-62-103. Two outbuildings associated with the Farm are located on an adjoining parcel: the Tax Identification Number for this parcel is 027-62-101. The property is zoned R-3.

**6. A brief historical sketch of the property:** This report contains a brief historical sketch of the property prepared by Lara Ramsey.

**7. A brief architectural description of the property:** This report contains a brief architectural description of the property prepared by Lara Ramsey.

**8. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets the criteria for designation set forth in N.C.G.S. 160A-400.5.**

a. Special significance in terms of its history, architecture, and/or cultural importance. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission judges that the J. Leonard Cashion Farm possesses special significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations:

1. The J. Leonard Cashion Farm is a physical reminder of the rural landscape of Mecklenburg County in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The farm, with its traditional I-house, outbuildings, and nearby tenant house, is typical of the many small farmsteads that flourished in the county in the decades after the Civil War.

2. J. Leonard Cashion, who built the farm along Eastfield Road in the mid-to-late 1880s, was the son of Burwell Cashion, a well-known and prosperous farmer in Long Creek Township. Burwell and his son farmed hundreds of acres, planting Indian corn, oats, wheat and cotton. What land the two men didn't plant themselves was tended by tenant farmers who lived on the property. The family was also active in their small farming community—Burwell founded Independence Hill Baptist Church, and both he and his son were active members of the congregation. The property on which Leonard Cashion's farm sits was given to him by his father.

b. Integrity of design, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association. The Commission contends that the architectural description prepared by Lara Ramsey demonstrates that the J. Leonard Cashion Farm meets this criterion.

**9. Ad Valorem Tax Appraisal:** The Commission is aware that designation would allow the owner to apply for an automatic deferral of 50% of the Ad Valorem taxes on all or any portion of the property that becomes a designated “historic landmark.” The current appraised value of the J. Leonard Cashion Farm (excluding the wood shed and tenant house—their value is unknown at this time) is \$57,000.00—\$11,000.00 for the house and \$46,000.00 for the 1.45 acres of land.

**Date of preparation of this report:** August 10, 2004

**Prepared by:** Lara Ramsey  
2436 North Albany Avenue, Apt. 1  
Chicago, IL 60647

## Statement of Significance



### Summary

The J. Leonard Cashion Farm, located at 10500 Eastfield Road in Mecklenburg County, NC, is a property that possesses local historic significance as a physical reminder of the rural landscape of Mecklenburg County in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The years following the Civil War were a time of growth and prosperity for Mecklenburg County’s farmers. Agricultural production, which had always been the backbone of the county’s economy, increased rapidly in the post-bellum decades, and the ever-expanding number of rail lines helped to facilitate trade

and led to the development of Charlotte and other smaller towns linked by the railroad. Between 1860 and 1900, the number of farms in Mecklenburg nearly quadrupled—most of these farms were modest enterprises of 100 acres or less. The Leonard Cashion Farm was one of these rural homesteads. Constructed in the early 1880s, the simple frame I-house was built by Leonard Cashion on land given to him by his father Burwell Cashion.

The J. Leonard Cashion Farm is also significant for its association with the Cashion Family. Leonard's father Burwell was a native of Mecklenburg County, and owned a prosperous farm encompassing several hundred acres in Long Creek Township. Burwell was also known as an active member of the small farming community that grew up around the Atlantic, Tennessee & Ohio Railroad between Charlotte and Huntersville. The elder Cashion founded Independence Hill Baptist Church, and owned the land on which the Bethesda Schoolhouse (which served the African American community in the area) was built. Leonard helped to run Burwell's farm and lived in his parent's home (located along Old Statesville Road) until 1881, when he married and began a family of his own. It was probably around this time that Leonard built his own house facing the tracks of the A T & O, on a portion of his father's farmland. Burwell deeded the roughly 100 acres surrounding the new house to his son in 1885, and Leonard took over the farming of this land until the turn of the twentieth century.

### **Historical Background Statement**



Tenant house situated east of the main farmhouse

## **Rural Mecklenburg County**

The J. Leonard Cashion Farm was built during a time of growth and prosperity for Mecklenburg County's farmers. Before the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, the county's economy, which was dominated by agriculture, was thriving. In 1850, Mecklenburg County ranked third in the state in cotton production, eleventh in corn production, and twelfth in wheat production.<sup>[1]</sup> With the building of the Charlotte & South Carolina Railroad in 1852, movement of these goods became much easier and faster. By 1860 four railways converged in Charlotte, which quickly evolved into a major trading center for cotton and other goods.<sup>[2]</sup>

While the Civil War took the lives of many soldiers from the county and completely disrupted the lives of those who stayed behind, the economic effects of the war were less severe than in many other areas of the South. In their survey of rural resources in Mecklenburg County, Sherry Joines and Dr. Dan Morrill explain the reason for the county's relatively good position:

Because large plantations were few and small farms plentiful in Mecklenburg, reduction of capital due to the loss of slaves was minimal. The average farm size after the Civil War was one hundred acres. These smaller farms had not been dependent upon slave labor, giving the owners an opportunity to replant and recover quickly.<sup>[3]</sup>

The number of railroads that survived the war were also crucial to helping rebuild the county, and the system of rail lines that crisscrossed the county (always passing through Charlotte) continued to expand in the years after the conflict ended.<sup>[4]</sup>

In the decades following the war, agricultural production—especially production of cotton—in Mecklenburg County increased dramatically. This was mainly due to the discovery of Peruvian guano as a fertilizer in 1860. Between 1860 and 1880, cotton production in Mecklenburg county went from 6,112 bales to 19,129 bales.<sup>[5]</sup> The number of individual farms in the county also grew substantially during these decades. In 1860, Mecklenburg contained 1182 farms; by 1880, the county had 2645, over twice as many.<sup>[6]</sup> By 1900, the number of farms had risen to 4,190.<sup>[7]</sup> Most of these were modest farms of less than 100 acres, on which were grown a variety of crops, including wheat, corn, and cotton.

### **The J. Leonard Cashion Farm**

The J. Leonard Cashion Farm was one of the many farmsteads established during these prosperous years in the late nineteenth century. The modest farm that Leonard Cashion owned for approximately 17 years can perhaps be more accurately viewed as



a sort of extension of his father Burwell's farmstead. Burwell Cashion was born in Mecklenburg County in 1816, the son of John Cashion and Margaret Wilmoth Loftis. After marrying Catherine Deweese (also of Mecklenburg County) in 1836, Burwell set up a small farmstead in Long Creek Township.<sup>[8]</sup> In the years leading up to the Civil War, Burwell Cashion slowly expanded his landholdings and his farm operations; by 1860, the Cashion Farm had grown to nearly 300 acres, 85 of which were improved. According to the 1860 Agriculture Schedule for Mecklenburg County, Burwell's farm produced nearly 100 bushels of wheat, 600 bushels of Indian corn, and four bales of cotton. The farm also included dozens of cattle, sheep, and hogs.<sup>[9]</sup> By 1870, the farm had grown even larger, with 100 acres of improved land, and over 400 acres of unimproved land.<sup>[10]</sup>

Burwell Cashion's farmstead was by no means the largest in the area—some of the area's most successful planters held over 1000 acres—but he was certainly more well off than most of the county's farmers, many of whom owned only 20 or 25 acres.<sup>[11]</sup> Burwell was also an active member of the small farming community in which he lived. In 1872, he founded Independence Hill Baptist Church, so named for its proximity to the site where the signing of Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence took place.<sup>[12]</sup> It is likely that the land on which the church was built was donated by Burwell Cashion. Cashion also deeded a small one-acre parcel of land in 1904 to the Mecklenburg County Board of Education; this lot contained the Bethesda Schoolhouse, which served the African American community in Croft and Mallard Creek.<sup>[13]</sup>

J. Leonard Cashion was born in 1848 on the Burwell Cashion Farm. Like many members of farming families, Leonard worked on his father's farm as a young man—because most men in the county during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries farmed, it made sense for Leonard to learn as much as he could about planting before inheriting his father's farm or beginning his own. Leonard worked the family farm and lived with his parents in their home—a large, two-story farmhouse located along what is now Old Statesville Road—until his marriage in 1881.<sup>[14]</sup> It was around that time that Leonard built the two-story, frame I-House on a portion of his father's farmland, facing the tracks of the Atlantic Tennessee & Ohio Railroad. In 1885, a few years after Leonard and his wife Mattie moved into their house, Burwell Cashion deeded 94  $\frac{3}{4}$  acres surrounding it to Leonard.<sup>[15]</sup>

Leonard Cashion continued to live and work on this modest farm through the final decades of the nineteenth century. The 1900 census lists Leonard as a farmer, although it is almost certain that there was a tenant who worked part of the farm.<sup>[16]</sup> In 1902, Leonard Cashion and his family moved from the farm to East Fourth Street in Charlotte. Cashion sold his 94 acres and house to P. Theodore

Christenbury, a prosperous farmer and landowner in the county. Leonard is listed in Charlotte City Directories from the first years of the twentieth century as a carpenter—although the 1902 directory does list the former farmer as “retired.”<sup>[17]</sup>

In August 1905, Burwell Cashion suffered a seemingly minor accident that quickly became serious. The Charlotte News reported that “Mr. Cashion was at his barn feeding his stock. A cow stepped on his foot, causing a slight abrasion [sic]. Blood poison soon developed and his entire limb has become affected.”<sup>[18]</sup> The wound proved fatal, and Burwell Cashion was buried at Independence Hill Baptist Church on August 20, 1905.<sup>[19]</sup> In his will, Burwell left Leonard a small, two-acre plot of land located between the A T & O railroad and Old Statesville Road. Leonard also sold this modest lot, which was in front of his old farm house, to P. T. Christenbury in 1907.<sup>[20]</sup> By 1910, Leonard Cashion was again overseeing portions of his father’s old farmstead, although he continued to live on East Fourth Street in the city of Charlotte.<sup>[21]</sup> His final years were spent in Huntersville, where he lived with his daughter Grace until his death in 1931.<sup>[22]</sup>

Under P. T. Christenbury’s ownership, the J. Leonard Cashion Farm stood unoccupied for decades—the property was one of several that Christenbury acquired for his three children. In 1933, with his son and two daughters grown, P. T. Christenbury deeded to each of them a farmstead with a house and approximately 100 acres of land.<sup>[23]</sup> Christenbury’s daughter Jane received the Leonard Cashion Farm. By that time, Jane had already been living on the farm with her husband Thomas Moore and daughter Doris—it is possible that Jane and Thomas had moved onto the property soon after their marriage in 1927.<sup>[24]</sup> According to Jane’s grandson John Maxwell, Thomas Moore farmed cotton through the 1930s, and later began a peony farm with the help of his son-in-law, Charles Kimball Maxwell.<sup>[25]</sup> In 1950, Thomas and Jane deeded a 1.46-acre lot beside the Cashion farmhouse to Doris and Charles Maxwell, where the couple built a one-story brick ranch house for themselves.<sup>[26]</sup> Charles and Doris received the rest of the Leonard Cashion land from Doris’ parents in 1974. Thomas and Jane Moore continued to live in the farmhouse until their deaths in 1982 and 1986. Today, the entire property is owned by Doris Maxwell Family, LLC, care of John K. Maxwell.<sup>[27]</sup>

## **Physical Description**





North Elevation

### **Site Description**

The J. Leonard Cashion Farm is located at 10500 Eastfield Road, near the Huntersville town limits in northern Mecklenburg County. The house sits on a 1.45-acre site that borders the east side of Eastfield Road, and faces south onto railroad tracks originally known as the Atlantic Tennessee and Ohio Railroad. A one-story brick ranch house, built around 1950 for Doris Moore Maxwell and her husband Charles, sits on an adjacent lot located northeast of the Cashion farm. The farmhouse shares a portion of the gravel drive that curves around to the brick ranch. Two outbuildings—a brick well house attached to the rear of the farmhouse, and a small, flat roof, frame chicken house—are on the same lot as the house. Two other outbuildings, a frame storage shed and a tenant house, sit on a large, 63.55-acre parcel that wraps around the two smaller lots. The wood frame, shed roof storage building sits to the south of the farmhouse, and is in a state of disrepair. The tenant house sits atop a small hill north of the brick ranch house, facing Eastfield Road. The building is typical of the county's tenant houses—it is a one-story, front gable, frame building, very modest in scale, with a small shed roof porch and exposed rafter tails. The standing seam metal roof is pierced by a small, center chimney. The windows and door of the house have been boarded over, and one of the wood beams supporting the porch roof is missing, causing one side of the roof to drop. The tenant house is directly in the path of the planned Interstate 485 extension.

### **Architectural Description**

The J. Leonard Cashion House is a two story, frame I-house approximately three bays wide and one bay deep. A single-story, hipped-roof porch runs along the façade

(south elevation) of the house. Simple support beams rise up along the porch to a wide, unadorned fascia, and a balustrade decorated with sawn boards wraps around the three sides of the porch. Decorative brackets adorn the top corners of the porch beams. A one-story gabled ell extends from the rear (north elevation) of the house, creating what is commonly known as a modified I-house form.<sup>[28]</sup> This ell contains the kitchen and dining room of the house. On the north and south walls of this rear ell are partially enclosed, integral porches that run the entire length of the ell. The lower halves of the porch walls are covered with vertical board, and the upper halves were originally screened. These porches were probably added to the ell in the late 1920s or early 1930s. Another addition to the house that was probably constructed during this time period is the narrow bathroom addition extending from the east end of the house's north (rear) elevation.



Porch Detail: note the sawn scroll-work typical of the Victorian architectural details add to Mecklenburg County farmhouses toward the end of the 19th century.

Two exterior brick chimneys are centered along the gable walls of the house, and a small interior chimney pierces the center of the roof on the rear ell. The roofs on the house, ell and front porch are all covered with standing seam metal roofing, which has rusted but is in fairly good condition. The exterior of the house is covered with wood boards that appear to have once been painted white. Like many late nineteenth century farmhouses, the Leonard Cashion Farm is ornamented only with applied decorative details along the top of the porch columns and along the porch balustrade; the cornice returns on the gable ends of the roof also provide a subtler form of ornamentation. Six-over-six, double hung wood windows regularly punctuate the walls of the house. All of the windows feature simple, unadorned wood surrounds, with no shutters or awnings. The front door of the house is centered along the façade, and is surrounded by two three-paned sidelights and topped with a transom with two lights.

The front entrance of the house leads directly into the large sitting room. Many of the architectural features—as well as much of the deterioration and damage—seen in this room are also seen throughout the house. The oak flooring, wood board walls covered with wallpaper, and simple door and window surrounds and baseboards in

the sitting room are in various states of disrepair. A brick fireplace opening is centered along the west wall of the room, between two windows; the wood mantle that originally covered the exposed brick of the chimney is gone. A straight-run staircase stretches along north wall of the room—the lower part of its railing is missing. A door leading into the rear ell is located on the west side of the staircase along this wall. A second door, located on the east side of the stair, leads into a kind of ante-room that is part of the 1930s bathroom addition. This small room in turn leads out onto the side porch along the east wall of the rear ell, as well as to the dining room of the ell. In fact, this space is little more than a series of four doors leading to different rooms in the house. The dining room in the rear ell contains the only wood mantle remaining within the house—this mantle along the room's north wall stands over a firebox that was closed, and apparently a wood stove replaced the more traditional fireplace. A door to the east of the mantle leads into the kitchen.

A door centered along the east wall of the main sitting room leads into the master bedroom, a large room that takes up the east bay of the first floor. The northwest corner of the room is taken up with a closet, which gives the otherwise rectangular room an irregular shape. The east wall of the bedroom looks much like the west wall of the sitting room, with a brick firebox (also without its mantle) flanked by two windows. A door along the north wall of the room leads into the narrow bathroom addition.

The second floor of the Leonard Cashion House contains two bedrooms. The stairway leads up to a generous center room; the south end of this room is enclosed (probably when Jane and Thomas Moore moved into the house) and used as an extra closet. Both bedrooms originally contained fireplaces with mantles—the east bedroom contains stripped firebox seen on the first floor, and the fireplace in the bedroom has been covered over.



Although the interior of the Cashion House is in poor condition, the house as a whole retains most of its significant features, and has been minimally altered. Its location, outbuildings (particularly the endangered tenant house), and association with the Cashion Family all make the J. Leonard Cashion Farm a significant, if fairly typical, example of farmsteads in late nineteenth century Mecklenburg County.

[<sup>1</sup>] Sherry J. Joines and Dr. Dan L. Morrill, "Historic Rural Resources in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina" <<http://www.cmhpf.org/surveyruralcontext.htm>> (7 August 2004), Ante-bellum Period.

[<sup>2</sup>] LeGette Blythe and Charles R. Brockman, *Hornet's Nest: The Story of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County* (Charlotte: McNally of Charlotte, 1961), 259-262.

[<sup>3</sup>] Sherry J. Joines and Dr. Dan L. Morrill. "Historic Rural Resources in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina" <<http://www.cmhpf.org/surveyruralcontext.htm>> (7 August 2004), Reconstruction.

[<sup>4</sup>] Thomas Hanchett, "Growth of Charlotte: A History" <<http://www.cmhpf.org/educhargrowth.htm>> (7 August 2004).

[<sup>5</sup>] Sherry J. Joines and Dr. Dan L. Morrill, Reconstruction.

[<sup>6</sup>] University of Virginia Geospatial and Statistical Data Center. *United States Historical Census Data Browser*. ONLINE. 1998. University of Virginia. Available: <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/census/> (7 August 2004).

[<sup>7</sup>] Ibid.

[<sup>8</sup>] "Descendents of Adriaen Hendricks Deweese," <<http://www.deweeses.com/aqwg41.htm>> (7 August 2004)

[<sup>9</sup>] 1860 United States Federal Agriculture Schedule, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, p. 19-20.

[<sup>10</sup>] 1870 United States Federal Agriculture Schedule, Long Creek Township, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, p. 3-4.

[<sup>11</sup>] *Branson's North Carolina Business Directory for 1872* (Raleigh, NC: Nichols & Gorman, 1872), 154.

[12]“Our Heritage,” Independence Hill Baptist Church website  
<http://www.independencehill.org/heritage.php> (7 August 2004).

[13]Stewart Gray and Paula M. Stathakis, “Survey and Research Report on the Bethesda Schoolhouse” <[http://cmhpf.org/Surveys&RBethesda.htm#\\_edn18](http://cmhpf.org/Surveys&RBethesda.htm#_edn18)> (8 August 2004).

[14] 1880 United States Federal Population Schedule, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, T\_972, p. 625; 1900 United States Federal Population Schedule, Mallard Creek Township, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, E.D.59, Page 12, Line 49.

[15] Mecklenburg County Deed Book 42, Page 396.

[16] 1900 United States Federal Population Schedule, Mallard Creek Township, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, E.D. 59, Page 12, Line 49.

[17] Mecklenburg County Deed Book 170 Page 220; 1902 Charlotte City Directory, 231; 1907 Charlotte City Directory, 248; 1909 Charlotte City Directory, 192.

[18] “Slight Accident May Cause Death,” *Charlotte News*, 16 August 1905, 4.

[19] “Funeral of Mr. Cashion,” *Charlotte News*, 21 August 1905, 5.

[20] Mecklenburg County Will Book “O” Page 314-16; Mecklenburg County Deed Book 226 Page 38.

[21] 1910 United States Federal Population Schedule, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, E.D. 110, Family 104.

[22] 1930 United States Federal Population Schedule, Huntersville, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, Roll 1707 Page 5A.

[23] Mecklenburg County Deed Book 846, Pages 126-128.

[24] Mecklenburg County Deed Book 846 Page 128; 1930 United States Federal Population Schedule, Mallard Creek Township, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, E.D.58, Sheet 9A.

[25] John Maxwell, interview with author, 31 July 2004.

[26] Mecklenburg County Deed Book 1444 Page 48.

[27] Mecklenburg County Deed Book 3692 Page 715; Social Security Administration. *Social Security Death Index, Master File*. Orem, UT: Ancestry, Inc. [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) (7 August 2004); Mecklenburg County Deed Book 14185 Page 592.

[28] Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000).