

**SURVEY AND RESEARCH REPORT  
ON THE  
THOMAS AND NANNIE JORDAN  
FARM**



1. **Name and location of the property:** The property known as the Thomas and Nannie Jordan Farm is located at 14601 Hus McGinnis Road, Huntersville, North Carolina.
2. **Name and address of the present owner of the property is:**

Dexter B. and Beulah F. Jordan

11401 Asbury Chapel Road

Huntersville, N.C. 28078

(704) 875-2266

3. **Representative photographs of the property:** This report contains representative photographs of the property.
4. **Maps depicting the location of the property:** This report contains a map depicting the location of the property.



5. **UTM coordinate:** 3916920N 518370E
6. **Current deed book and tax parcel information for the property:**  
The most recent deed to this property is recorded in Mecklenburg County Deed Book 6224 on page 54. The Tax Parcel Number of the property is 02103117.
7. **A brief historical sketch of the property:** This report contains a brief historical sketch of the property.

8. **A brief architectural and physical description of the property:** This report contains a brief architectural and physical description of the property.
9. **Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets 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 Commission judges that the property known as the Thomas and Nannie Jordan Farm does possess special significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations:
    1. The Thomas and Nannie Jordan Farm, including its outbuildings, is a physical reminder of the rural landscape of Mecklenburg County in the mid-to-late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The farm features a simple I-house form and outbuildings, which include a barn, well house and blacksmith/carpenter shop. It is typical of the many small farmsteads in the area that prospered in the years after the Civil War.
    2. Thomas H. Jordan and Nannie Jordan and subsequent generations of the Jordan family have owned this farm since the 1870s and have demonstrated the entrepreneurial skills that have been necessary to survive as yeoman agriculturalists in rural Mecklenburg County.
  - b. **Integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling and/or association:** The Commission contends that the physical and architectural description which is included in this report demonstrates that the Thomas and Nannie Jordan Farm meets this criterion.

10. **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 house and outbuilding is \$59,300.00. The current appraised value of the land is \$249,800.00. The current total tax value is \$309,100.00.

**Date of preparation of this report:** November 2004

**Prepared by:** Paul Archambault

### **Historical Overview**

The main house on the Thomas and Nannie Jordan Farm, located near Huntersville in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, was built during the 1870s according to the present owner, Dexter Jordan. It was constructed during a time of growth and prosperity for plantation owners and small farmers. The destruction of the agrarian system in the South significantly affected much of the region's economy. However, the piedmont area of North Carolina, particularly Mecklenburg County, experienced much development and expansion with the advent of the Charlotte and South Carolina Railroad in 1852, and the Atlantic, Tennessee, and Ohio Railroad in 1860.<sup>[1]</sup> In addition, Mecklenburg County suffered minimal capital damage with the loss of slave labor, because there were few large plantations and an abundance of smaller farms, which averaged one hundred acres in size.<sup>[2]</sup> The county's population grew to 17,374 as Charlotte rapidly evolved into a major trading center for cotton and other goods.<sup>[3]</sup>

The primary crops grown on the Jordan Farm in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were cotton, corn, and wheat. In 1850, an analysis of North Carolina agriculture showed that Mecklenburg County ranked third in cotton production, eleventh in corn production, and twelfth in wheat production. The introduction of the fertilizer Peruvian guano dramatically increased the number of ginned bales from 6,112 in 1860 to 19,129 in 1880.<sup>[4]</sup> Local farmers, like Thomas Jordan, experienced a change in lifestyle due to their successful yield of cotton. In the 1880s, Jordan added a kitchen and dining room, a well house, and a full-width, hipped roof porch to his simple I-house

as other more ornate Folk Victorian domiciles were constructed in the surrounding area.

Typical of many post-bellum farms in Mecklenburg County, the Jordan Farm included a simple I-house, detached kitchen, well house, blacksmith/carpenter shop, chicken house, and later a granary. Thomas Jordan, born September 5, 1856, occupied and worked on the farm until his death on August 18, 1894. Jordan was a man of many trades as he not only grew crops, but was a blacksmith, carpenter, and gunsmith. "Tom" as he was known, served the community by building cabinets, wagon parts, caskets, and gunstocks. In the early 1890s, Thomas was stricken with typhoid fever; and he would never fully recovered from his sickness. While constructing wagon wheels for a local customer in the heat of the summer, "Tom" collapsed and died. Upon his death, the farm was inherited by his wife, Nannie.<sup>[5]</sup>

Born Nannie Davis on October 8, 1866, Nannie married Thomas in the 1880s. Nannie, a member of the Davis Family who owned the local general store, cared for Oliver, their son, and the farm after Thomas's death. "Miss Nannie," as her grandchildren referred to her, later remarried a William Puett. He assisted with the farming duties along with Oliver until Nannie and her husband moved and deeded the land to Oliver in 1920.<sup>[6]</sup>

Oliver Jordan, born on September 14, 1885, was only nine years old when his father died. He learned the responsibilities of the farm at an early age as he helped his dad pump the bellows for the furnace in the blacksmith shop, which was not his favorite task. The youngster quickly abandoned his blacksmith duties when Thomas passed away, and left the shop available to the community. Oliver tended to the fields as he continued to grow cotton, corn, wheat, and oats. In the 1920s and 1930s, he added a granary, garage, and an additional chicken and pig house.

In the 1910s, Oliver and his wife, Minnie Ferrell, had three children by the names of Olin, Eva, and Dexter. Growing up on the farm, the children took on many chores. Dexter, the youngest sibling, recalls milking the cows and setting the rabbit boxes before daylight and school everyday. After performing those duties, Dexter walked to the

nearby one-room schoolhouse located approximately one mile from the farm at the present site of Asbury United Methodist Church on Asbury Chapel Road. He attended the school until the third grade when it closed, and later enrolled in a four-room schoolhouse, which remains in existence near Old Statesville Road. After seventh grade, Dexter and his siblings went to the high school in Huntersville.<sup>[7]</sup>

For recreation away from the farm as a youth, Dexter enjoyed playing sandlot baseball, usually against the black children from the nearby African American church near the corner of Eastfield Road and Asbury Chapel Road. Olin, on the other hand, hunted rabbits, squirrels, and fished during the summers as Dexter never acquired the patience for those pursuits.<sup>[8]</sup>

The establishment of cotton mills in Charlotte and the surrounding small towns in the county created work and prosperity for many small farmers. In 1910, the production of cotton peaked as did the number of farms in Mecklenburg County.<sup>[9]</sup> Before the Great Depression, the primary monetary crop on the Jordan Farm was cotton. Oliver, assisted by Olin and Dexter, made regular trips to the cotton gin near Huntersville as he loaded the cotton in his wagon, which was pulled by mules.<sup>[10]</sup> However, the introduction of the boll weevil, circa 1920, forced farmers to resort to more expensive planting and cultivation techniques.<sup>[11]</sup> The Jordan's continued to grow cotton until the 1940s when the demand and cost for cotton began to decline.<sup>[12]</sup>

As young men in the 1930s and 1940s, Olin and Dexter began tending to a majority of the farming duties, especially when Oliver became sick from heat exhaustion and suffered poor health for two years. The Great Depression added more responsibility for the boys as the family graciously assisted other families in the area with planting and sharing food. Minnie Ferrell Jordan's brother lived on the farm for a short period when he lost his job at a mill in Charlotte. After the Great Depression, the primary crops grown on the farm were wheat, oats, and corn. Oliver, Olin, and Dexter thrashed the wheat and took it to the mill to get flour, and used the corn to make cornmeal. On Tuesday and Saturday they traveled to Charlotte, and sold eggs and produce to their regular customers and stores.<sup>[13]</sup>

Dexter remained on the farm until he left in 1942 to serve in the Air Force. During World War II, he was stationed in England until October 1945. When Dexter returned home, he began working in Charlotte at a radiator shop. In 1949, he married Beulah Ferrell, and later built a house on property approximately two miles from the farm. Dexter eventually opened his own shop in 1964 where he worked until he sold the business to his partner and retired in 1986.<sup>[14]</sup>

Olin and Eva continued living at the farm with their parents when Dexter left for the war in 1942. The Agricultural Adjustment Administration Act in President Roosevelt's New Deal reduced crop acreage and livestock production, which affected the amount of work on the Jordan Farm. Further, post-World War II development and expansion in Charlotte-Mecklenburg County began to eliminate the rural character and significance of farms.<sup>[15]</sup> To complicate matters further, Oliver Jordan died on April 1, 1956.

After Minnie's death in 1979, the remaining farm and property was divided among her children.<sup>[16]</sup> Olin Jordan tended to the garden next to the house where he grew and sold okra and beans. Eva and her brother never married and lived the rest of their years on the farm. Dexter urged Olin to sell the farm and enjoy himself, but Olin was too sentimental and stubborn about selling the property. After a car accident in 2001, Olin eventually moved to a nursing home for better care. On December 27, 2003, Olin died, and Dexter inherited the farm and twenty-eight acres of property. Dexter continues to own the property and live with Beulah at his home on Asbury Chapel Road.

## Physical Description

### Site Description

The Thomas and Nannie Jordan Farm is located at 14601 Hus McGinnis Road south of Huntersville town limits in north Mecklenburg County on a twenty-eight acre parcel of land. Hus McGinnis Road is approximately five hundred feet south of the farmhouse. The original structures on the farm, built in the 1870s, incorporate the architectural elements associated with the simple I-house form, which included a detached kitchen, and still contain the well house, blacksmith/carpenter shop, barn, granary, chicken house, pig house, and garage.



The farm property, originally one hundred acres, includes two large oak trees in front of the house, and a small garden situated ten feet west of the abode. The detached kitchen was originally located one hundred feet east of the domicile. The rear of the Jordan's house was originally the front façade, and it faced north toward a road below the house. A side-gabled wood blacksmith/carpenter shop and chicken house are original farm



structures, which are located near the old road approximately one hundred fifty feet north of the house. A small gabled, wood pig shelter and shed roof chicken house, built in the early twentieth century, sit approximately sixty feet and forty-five feet respectively north of the house. A two-story, wood granary, constructed in the early twentieth century by Oliver Jordan, is covered with standing seam metal and is situated thirty feet northeast of the abode. The gabled garage, built in the 1930s, sits twenty feet north of the house. A stone well surrounded by brick is situated forty feet south of the residence. It is covered by a gabled, wood well house, which was constructed in the late nineteenth century. Located approximately one hundred twenty-five feet south of the domicile is a two-story, gabled, log barn, built near the date of construction of the house. The barn, which sheltered mules, cows, and horses, includes a hipped roof extension around the entire perimeter of the original barn. Finally, a concrete block springhouse is located twenty-five feet east of the home.



## **Architectural Description**

The original house is a two-story, gabled house covered with a seam metal roof. It is two-bays wide and one-bay deep. The current front facade, originally the rear of the house, includes a full-width, hipped-roof porch, which is supported by plain wood posts. The wood porch, added in the 1880s, is supported by brick piers, and the

original house rests on fieldstone piers. A four-panel door and six-over-six, sash window are sheltered by the porch roof on the first-story. The second-story includes two, four-over-four, double hung windows. The east elevation features an external chimney with replacement bricks on the top section. A six-over-six, double hung window is located on the first-story at the rear of the east elevation, and a four-over-four, double hung window is situated above on the second-story. The west elevation of the domicile features two, six-over-six, double hung windows on the first-story, and a small, multi-paned window, which is located on the top, center of the second-story.



The rear elevation, originally the front façade, features two, six-over-six, sash windows on the first-story, and a large, multi-paned window (originally a four-over-four, double hung window) on the second-story. A one-bay wide, and two-bay deep, gabled addition extends from the rear elevation, and includes a one-room, screened, hipped-roof porch, which extends east from the addition. The porch roof is supported by wood posts, and the porch rests on brick piers. It shelters a four-panel door. The addition also features one six-over-six, sash window on both sides, and a one-room, shed-roof wing, which extends west of the addition. The rear addition rests on concrete blocks which have been infilled.

The front entrance of the house leads into a large sitting room. A wood frame fireplace with a wooden mantle is located on the east wall of the room. It is located between a six-over-six

window, and the L-staircase door and entrance, which stretch along the south and east wall. The walls in the sitting room are covered with original, wooden flush boards, and the wood floor is covered with linoleum tile. Two entrances with doors located on the west wall of the room lead to two small rooms, which both have two, six-over-six double hung windows, original wood floors, and walls covered with original wooden flush boards. A six-over-six double hung window and an entrance (original house entrance) to the rear addition are situated on the north wall.



The rear gabled two-room addition, added in the 1880s, served as the dining room and kitchen. A wood fireplace and mantle are located on the north wall of the dining room, and two six-over-six double hung windows are situated on the east and west walls. The kitchen entrance is located on the north wall, which is west of the fireplace. The walls in the kitchen and dining room are covered with wood paneling and the floors are covered with linoleum, which cover the original wooden floor. In addition, both rooms have a drop ceiling. The kitchen's north wall includes a six-over-six double hung window, wooden cabinets, sink, and counter. A wood stove pipe opening is located on top of the south wall along with a pantry door entrance. The west wall of the kitchen includes an entrance to the bathroom, which was built in 1949 when the Jordan's added plumbing and electricity to the house. A one-over-one window is located on the south wall of the bathroom

addition. The entrance to the enclosed screened porch is located along the kitchen's east wall.

The second floor is accessed by an L-staircase which leads into a large bedroom where the Jordan children slept. It includes a fireplace and wooden mantle, and a four-over-four double hung window on the east wall. The north wall is covered with cardboard, and the east wall features the entrance into an additional room, which includes a six-over-six window on the south wall and a multi-paned window on the north wall. Wood frame rafters and hand-hewn logs, which support the metal roof, are visible in both second floor rooms.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Blythe, LeGette and Brockmann, Charles R. *Hornet's Nest: The Story of Charlotte and Mecklenburg*

*County*. Charlotte: Heritage Printers, Inc., 1961, p. 261.

<sup>[2]</sup> Joines, Sherry J. and Morrill, Dr. Dan L. "Historic Rural Resources in Mecklenburg County, North

Carolina." (Reconstruction Era) Available at: <http://www.cmhpf.org/surveyruralcontext.htm>.

<sup>[3]</sup> *Hornet's Nest*, p. 449.

<sup>[4]</sup> "Historic Rural Resources in Mecklenburg County, North, Carolina." (Ante-bellum Period and

Reconstruction)

<sup>[5]</sup> Interview, Dexter Jordan. October 11, 2004.

<sup>[6]</sup> Mecklenburg County Deed Book 436, Page 106. October 11, 1920.

<sup>[7]</sup> Interview, Dexter Jordan. October 11, 2004

<sup>[8]</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>[9]</sup> “Historic Rural Resources in Mecklenburg County, North, Carolina.” (Reconstruction and Industrialization).

<sup>[10]</sup> Interview, Dexter Jordan. October 11, 2004.

<sup>[11]</sup> “Historic Rural Resources in Mecklenburg County, North, Carolina.” (Industrialization).

<sup>[12]</sup> Interview, Dexter Jordan. October 11, 2004.

<sup>[13]</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>[14]</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>[15]</sup> “Historic Rural Resources in Mecklenburg County, North, Carolina.” (Industrialization).

<sup>[16]</sup> Mecklenburg County Deed Book 4496 Page 221. December 10, 1981.