

INTRODUCTION

Located eleven miles west of Burgau , the county seat of Pender County, North Carolina and eight miles west of Interstate 40 and straddling either side of state highway 11, the site encompassed in original form some 2400 acres and 142, 20-acre farmsteads including outbuildings. The Penderlea Homestead Farms are a substantially intact example of the US federal government's effort to plan rural communities during the Great Depression in 1934. It was originally developed by Hugh MacRae as one of several planned rural cooperative communities encompassing portions of some 200,000 acres. It differs from the earlier efforts in that it was the most expensive, had the most ambitious of social goals and was actually developed by the federal government as part of the New Deal efforts of the Resettlement Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps. It also is unique as a rural community in that it was consciously laid out by John Nolen, a Harvard based Landscape Architect expanding Mr. MacRae's vision of what it takes to build communities. Mr. MacRae himself was an accomplished engineer, visionary, and financier who developed these ideal communities based on a European model of village life and he had thirty years in building similar private farm communities in this area.¹ In this plan, Nolen developed concept sketches not only of the disposition of the individual parcels but also of a typical house plan, farmstead layout, and road/drainage section – all fundamental components of the shared vision of a idealized rural community (See Figure 1).

NATURAL SETTING

The area's natural aspect is an important part of the identity of the site. Located in the extensive coastal plain, the area's underlying geology is marine formed limestone overlain with fairly deep sandy loam². Its vegetation has been traditionally pineland flats and is

one of the most extensive forest types in the Southeastern United States but it is

¹ Marcia G. Synnott, "Hugh MacRae, Penderlea, and the Model Farm Communities Movement," *Proceedings of the South Carolina Historical Association* (1988), 53-65 quoted in <http://ncmarkers.com/Markers.aspx?ct=ddl&sp=search&k=Markers&sv=D-91%20-%20PENDERLEA%20HOMESTEADS>

² <http://www.geology.enr.state.nc.us/usgs/coastalp.htm>

rare today; dominated almost exclusively by longleaf pine with a wiregrass understory; very high species diversity of herbaceous vegetation (as much as 50 species / m²); fire-tolerant and fire-dependent for regeneration; original forested areas were converted to agricultural production, where forest cover remained long-leaf was replaced by loblolly and hardwoods³.

The area is also accented by occasional pocosins and Carolina bays, which tend to be wetlands with deep peat soils and distinctive vegetation such as the sweet bay, loblolly bay and red bay as well as Venus fly traps and other potentially endangered and somewhat rare species. These sites have been recognized as “Bays” in the planning for the site. Its topography is generally flat with distinctly rolling side slopes (5%) at the boundaries leading to the various creeks or canals. One serpentine branch of Sills Creek known as Crooked Run cuts through the middle of the site providing a drainage outfall for the ditches of the entire southern half of the site. This manmade drainage development proved to be vital for the further development of agriculture in this portion of the coastal plain.

SITE EVALUATION

Before European development, however, the site was home to some American Indian activity strongly evidenced by the finds of the homesteaders and documented by State Archeology Survey as site No. PdV11 (or also as 31PD11) as follows:

Murray Farm is now Penderlea Homestead Museum. 31PD11 is partly on property owned by heirs of the Murray Farm. The Murray family knew the site as “Indian Hill”... a small collection of projectile points, reputedly found at 31PD11, are exhibited at the museum. Guilford lanceolate, Murrow mountain I, and Savannah River series Archaic points as well as Yadkin series Woodland points were observed. Sand tempered/cord marked (possibly New River series), lithic debitage and nonnative unworked stone were also in the owner’s collection. This place is well known locally as a place to “hunt for arrowheads.”⁴

Although this likely archeologically promising area is now under private ownership, this site was set aside in Nolen’s early planning for a park, then as part of the existing drainage and vegetated buffer. After contact, the history of the site is likely tied to the

³ <http://core.ecu.edu/BIOL/luczkovichj/NCecol/NCnathis.htm> from Environments and Ecosystems of North Carolina* by Joseph J. Luczkovich. Ph.D.

⁴ HPO, North Carolina Archeology Survey, Site No. PdV11 named Murphy Farm

development of the southern plantation economy of the area which typically utilized the pinelands first for naval stores and then for various cash crops. A 1775 Mouzon map shows large Plantation holdings by a Benjamin Robinson and David Williams which include the tract now comprising Penderlea. In 1870, the land was purchased after the Civil War by E.R. Brink of New York who designated the area as “The Brinks’ Colony,” an attempt at a farm community. Brink evidently created a subdivision map and sold the portions to New Yorker City patrons as investment farms; but the colony failed when a Wilmington Bank foreclosed on the entire project. There were some small farms, however, in the “Brinks’ Colony” area. The main family farming there were the Pigfords, whose number even warranted a church and a cemetery that still exists in Penderlea⁵.

DEFINING FEATURES TODAY

The property was assembled in the early twentieth century by Hugh MacRae and his roads and drainage works are the current defining feature of the site overall⁶. These elements of infrastructure support an important hierarchy of communal facilities and private farmsteads acting to reinforce an overall notion of a planned community. Historic photos taken from the water tanks as well as design plans document a cohesive community building layout, agricultural uses, and farms and outbuildings pattern. These attributes are in evidence there today. Within each farmstead there is a clear and repeated pattern of house and accessory structures including chicken coup, small barn (also known as a pack house), pump house, smoke house, and wash house (Figure 4 & 11). In addition, the electrification of each farm was ahead of its time allowing more efficient use of the land and greater quality of life for the homesteaders of the time. The vision of agricultural development was thus for small, European style farmsteads that would encourage better husbandry and agricultural practices. Small scale dairies and fruit, vegetable and flower production were encouraged directly by the government originally rather than the traditional soil depleting, more industrial corn, tobacco, or cotton farming practices of the area generally (Figure 5). (The government did later allow small-scale

⁵ Cottle, Ann S. *The Roots of Penderlea: A Memory of a New Deal Homestead Community*. Publishing Laboratory, University of North Carolina Wilmington, Wilmington, NC, 2006

⁶ Conversation with and email from Michael Hill, NC Office of Archives and History, June 10, 2010

tobacco farming to allow for some diversification; however, it was strictly limited in an allotment system.) Finally, the development of the private gardens was encouraged and planned from the beginning by the government and is in evidence in the small scale landscapes extant⁷. Foundation shrubs outline most of the houses. Shade trees are strategically placed. Gardens and arbors are functional and placed in a remarkably consistent manner. Lawns are uniformly neat and well maintained (Figure 6). Even a stately Post Oak dominates the local Potts Church graveyard.

In several cases, houses have been lost either to removal of the house to offsite or because of neglect. Despite these losses, the overall pattern of development is still quite recognizable in the ditches and streams. Despite the general continuing decline of modern rural areas, the diversified agricultural practices are seen today in the smaller private agricultural endeavors with grape vines (at least one of which purportedly dates from its 1930's planting), row vegetables, occasional chicken and livestock⁸. Many of these farms have been subdivided as the larger farming and nursery operations have been consolidated; however, the pattern of farming smaller sections and the defining drainage have been generally maintained. Also, generally along the periphery there are emerging large poultry operations which threaten the visual and small scale aesthetic of the homestead area. In addition, approximately half the area is under management as a wholesale nursery operation⁹. This has, however, maintained the fundamental land pattern but does reflect the decline over time of the many individual farms. Finally, there is a large section in the middle of the tract that has been allowed to redevelop woodlands which threatens to separate visually the two sides of the proposed district. Thus, the individual farmsteads continue to be central to the original vision and with many modifications that read clearly in the modern landscape (Figure 7).

Equally important to the individual farm homesteads are the community facilities developed by the planners. These facilities are located in the rough center of the development in a horseshoe-shaped arrangement of buildings and roads.

⁷ Cottle.

⁸ Conversations with Joe Carr and Roderick McGlohon, both long time residents of Crooked Run Road, May, 2010.

⁹ Conversation with Jimbo Robbins, owner of the Robbins Nursery, May, 2010.

To do this, they would build a community consisting of family farms; a school complex complete with library, cafeteria & teacherage; a vegetable grading shed, potato storage house, cannery, grist and feed mills, general store, social building, furniture factory, a hosiery mill, church and other buildings. All around a cooperative truck farm with a central marketing plant¹⁰.

Although the road and building layout have changed from the original plan, they have developed as an attempt to diversify the local economic base over time by allowing homesteaders to make money in other ways than only agriculture¹¹. This has been especially important since the days of the Depression starting in World War II. There was also planned an enlightened view of personal development for rural areas in the central school house as well as the matrix of recreational opportunities presented in the surrounding parks, creeks and lakes¹². Although these areas were eventually incorporated into private property, they have been important communal areas traditionally. These recreation and drainage areas, not so commonly used by large numbers of children today, are more overgrown, polluted by trash and dumping or eutrophied by runoff. They still function as fundamental drainage but their recreation uses are not immediately apparent (Figure 8).

DEFINING SIGNIFICANCE

Despite the many changes over time described above, the natural lay of the land as it was enhanced through MacRae's and Nolen's planning provide a convincing larger context for the existing farms, outbuildings, community buildings, and infrastructure. It continues to provide a workable, definable, agricultural basis for an evolving rural landscape. It also serves to tie the existing buildings into a cohesive, communal whole that tells the history of an idealized farming community set up during a national crisis and continues to serve the interest of rural life (Figures 9 and 10). In considering it as a rural historic area, there are strong arguments for all the significance of this property in all the areas of National Register Criteria. Its association with the Great Depression and

10 <http://www.pendercountync.gov/Visiting/History.aspx>

11 Cottle,___ .

12 Nolen, John. WHAT IS NEEDED IN AMERICAN CITY PLANNING? City Planning. Hearing Before the Committee on the District of Columbia United States Senate on the Subject of City Planning. 61stCongress, 2nd Session, Senate Document No. 422. (Washington: government Printing Office, 1910):74-75.

the story of the farming community that formed with the help of the US Government and building on the formal designs of Nolen and on-site expertise of MacRae are compelling parts of its story. Its buildings types and details are distinctive to the time reflecting the vision of small-scale farming and the importance of community facilities in rural settings. The assemblage of buildings and farms as well as the development of the plan's infrastructure in roads and drainage represents a significant and distinguishable entity still in evidence on the land today. Finally, by virtue of the foresight of the original planners, the open space within the property seems likely to yield information important to the prehistory of the Native Americans. In the context of modern sprawl development and industrial farming in this and most other rural areas, this district is unique and worthy of consideration for the National Register as a Rural Historic Landscape.

CRITERIA AND DISCUSSION FOR RURAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS

The National Register spells out four basic criteria for significance as follows:

1. that are associated with events that have made a significant contributions to the broad patterns of our history;
2. that are associated with the lives of significant persons in our past;
3. that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represents 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
4. that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important to our prehistory or history¹³.

As discussed, the property is part of the events of the federal response to the rural problems created by the Great Depression. As such, its story is a physical representation of a time of great turmoil and tremendous idealism as people such as Hugh MacRae and John Nolen devoted their professional lives to the betterment of society. As Mr. MacRae said in consideration of the plight of the rural people and places,

While America has been an agricultural country, and while its wealth has been based on its agriculture, we have gazed so intently at figures relating to commercial development and manufacturing and to the financial transactions incident thereto, that the word "America" has to most of us carried with it the idea of finance and commerce; in other words, the measuring of values and the handling of products rather than the idea of their production. We have relatively gone behind the rest of the world in our agricultural methods, and in our nourishment and care of the farming interests. Our thought has not been focused in that direction. Yet no one doubts that

¹³ National Park Service, Cultural Resources. *National Register Bulletin, Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Rural Historic Landscapes*. US Department of the Interior, 1989, revised 1999.

agriculture is the foundation stone of the nation's material welfare, and also of its political stability. We must pay more attention to agriculture if the national structure is to have the proper proportions. No good architect will build a skyscraper on a weak or dangerous foundation. Why should we as a nation build a top-heavy structure? Why should we longer neglect the things that are basic?¹⁴

His idealism was typical to the spirit of the time seeking to redress larger issues and his willingness to become intellectually and financially involved. The overlay of the federal response to the local, private efforts created many tensions, but the fundamental overriding issue was larger than the political ideologies of the day. Mr. Nolen's participation through the inclusion of Penderlea as part of the federal response was in many ways because MacRae had already worked with John Nolen; MacRae had assembled the land and had examined its suitability; and the two had already worked together. With all of the issues that came up over the years, it is this common "practical idealism"¹⁵ that made a significant contribution to the recovery from the Depression and hence to our nation's history.

It was the first of the farm colonies that the federal government was involved in and significant to the history of this effort it was the most expensive of many such projects¹⁶. It became the center of much of the discussion of the role of the federal government and helped to shape the continuing federal response. It came to represent the idea that government was too involved in people's lives because of the uncertainty and bureaucracy that the earliest homesteaders experienced. As a schoolboy wrote in verse composed expressing the feelings of resentment of the day:

On the farm we have busted pumps
And lots of trouble burning stumps,
While white-collared big shots hang around
To show the farmer how to tend the ground¹⁷.

¹⁴ MacRae, Hugh. "Vitalizing the Nation and Conserving Human Units Through the Development of Agricultural Communities Source": *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 63, National Industries and the Federal Government (Jan., 1916), pp. 278-286
Published by: Sage Publications, Inc. in association with the American Academy of Political and Social Science Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1012949> Accessed: 02/08/2010 14:03

¹⁵ Conkin, Paul K. *Tomorrow a New World: the New Deal Community Program*. From the collection of Prelinger Library, san Francisco, 2006. available online at

<http://www.archive.org/details/tomorrownewworld00conkrich>, accessed August 2, 2010, 293

¹⁶ Conkin, 293

¹⁷ Lasswell, *Resettlement Communities* quoted in Conkin, p. 291.

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As a pattern of federal and local response, the story of Penderlea is one that has to be seen as an evolutionary one that hinges on not only the original design but how the people of the place have responded over time to preserve the values of place and make their way forward through the Depression, a world war, and modernity itself. This is a story that can best be told with the material culture that is in place there as well as the stories of the people who have lived through much of it. As such, the extant landscape features of the place tell a significant story.

Relating to the second criteria, both John Nolen and Hugh MacRae qualify as significant people. Mr. Nolen because of his long history of work as a landscape architect and planner. He studied at Harvard with Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and designed over four hundred projects as a landscape architect and community planner¹⁸. Mr. MacRae was a MIT trained engineer who made a fortune in the Wilmington area in public utilities and devoted much of his time to his rural experiments. He developed six different communities northwest of Wilmington as private ventures with varying amounts of success¹⁹ and with little left on the ground at this point. He also was influential with President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal efforts and had Penderlea set up as the first U.S. experimental agricultural colony under the New Deal Subsistence Homestead program²⁰. He was also the first on site manager. As such, both significant people were associated with this project.

The last aspect of the third criteria seems most appropriate – “distinctive characteristics that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction”. The overall land plan has a distinctive horseshoe layout, assemblage of community buildings in the center, a network of farms whose historical footprint is defined by drainage and clearing. Figure 9 and 10 show oblique aerial views that highlight how much the road layout and drainage system is in evidence today. Figure 14 is an infrared aerial that also shows the interplay of fields, surrounding woodlands, and network of drainage features. In addition, the repetition of individual assemblages of farm related structures although showing loss and change is a definite characteristic that define the individual farmsteads (Figure 11). These farms are tied together by the road

¹⁸ Hancock, John, *John Nolen and the American City Planning Movement: A History of Culture Change and Community Response, 1900-1940* (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1964).

¹⁹ Cottle, 8.

²⁰ Ibid, 11.

system not only to the outside communities that they market their crops to but also to themselves in the community buildings still in place especially the school.

The final criteria related to importance to history or prehistory has not been ultimately established. There are signs of continual human habitation into prehistory which has become a part of the homesteader's story of individual acts of discovery of arrowheads, stone artifacts and the like. It is also part of a larger landscape of long leaf pines and rare and endangered plant species that form the setting of this prehistory. Many of these trees were taken down to provide open farms, many remained. The idea of "Penderlea in the pines" quoted in early magazines to talk about this place seems representative of its broader landscape history and prehistory. Much of these artifacts may be available in the drainage streams and open space that was part of the original planning.

PERIODS AND AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE

From Penderlea's inception as a government run and sponsored project in 1933, its construction start in 1934 with CCC camps and ongoing construction after the first homesteaders arrived mostly in 1936 and up to the federal government divestment of the property resulting in a complete turnover of original homesteaders in 1943, the first period of significance is tied completely with the act of consolidating a new concept of farming in rural North Carolina. This concept was based on small farms utilizing modern agricultural methods (terracing, careful planning for double crops, drainage, and topsoil development) and technologies such as providing electricity to every home in itself a first for the area. In this regard, the individual farm reflected this approach in its smaller building footprint with multiple functional outbuildings such as barns, pump houses, bath houses and the like. These were all clustered in one area allowing the majority of the roughly 20 acre plots to be managed for a variety of crops and animals. The provisions of community facilities and recreation areas made Penderlea unique in the area²¹. In addition, the idea of cooperative farming with smaller homesteaders seeking to develop a diversified income not entirely dependent on farming was a result of the needs of the people actually living there combined with the social planning ideas of both Washington and the designers.

²¹ Conkin,

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The difficulties in managing costs and people's expectations, however, as well as the failure of the Washington administration to "personalize administration" resulted in a complete turn over of property by 1943. In fact, the Farm Security Administration sent a sociologist to Penderlea in 1940 to study this problem. He developed a documented study for the necessity for community involvement and careful control of public perceptions and expectations²². Many of the next generation of homesteaders still live on the property and many associated with it over the years come to the yearly gatherings "Penderlea days" in June. This post-war generation of homesteaders operating with considerably more latitude in terms of agricultural practices and community management built a sense of place that derives from the original plan as sense of architecture and landscape but which has proven to allow a greater variety of rural economies.

Over the years, much of the land has been consolidated into larger holdings either through purchase or lease. The original Nolen plan called for 10 acre plots based on the notion of individual farmsteads being able to manage two growing seasons in this place. This was quickly changed into 20 acre plots even before the farms were leased initially in the 1930's. By the time of the sale of the properties to the homesteaders in 1943 the average farm size had virtually doubled again²³ and later in the 1980's was even larger²⁴.

Many of the original homesteads, however, still retain the original footprint of buildings and outbuildings with usually some vegetable farming and the like but subdivided from its larger agriculture plot. These smaller holding still show signs of the original production ideas – truck crops like tomatoes and cucumbers, small scale animal silage like corn, hay, and soybeans, family consumption like potatoes and grapes, and even considerable flower production²⁵. There are also many structures that were significantly remodeled or moved off site as evidenced in Figure 2 in the parcels that are shown as "contributing landscape and/or outbuildings". The addition of a corn silo or the additional barn to house mechanical equipment is common and is indicative of these larger farms (Figure 7). Thus, the property lines have shifted and even some buildings

²² Ibid, p. 288.

²³ Refer to Gurganus deed for parcel PD0321 in Pender county records deed book 255 page 141 which shows that the plot had always been 42 acres.

²⁴ Refer to Robbins Nursery deeds for parcel PDO367 and PDO 370 in Pender County records deed book 663 page 24 which show both 20 and 40 acre parcels combined to the present holdings of 118.06 acres with several smaller 1 to 2 acre farmsteads excepted from original tracts as outparcels.

²⁵ Interview with Joe Roderick, June 2010.

have been removed or altered; however, the underlying agricultural production with their drainage patterns which outline and support the fields are very much in evidence. Thus, the change after World War II was more a result of changing economics and less a dramatic change in the landscape and rural character of the place.

INTEGRITY

Penderlea has changed in many ways continually since its settlement, but it maintains a sense of place and community mostly derived from the original design and important management efforts that have made the place viable long term. Certainly it is distinctive even to a casual observer in the size of its lots, its assemblage of building types, its smaller and defined field system, and its basic layout of roads and open space. It is surrounded by large rural land holdings that convey a sense of just how experimental - as an exercise in rural egalitarianism and democracy - Penderlea was and is even today (Figure 11). To analyze the basic components of integrity is frequently complex and open to interpretation; so, this clear sense of place after many years and changes is significant.

Its **location** elements are still in place. Its proximity to streams and lakes as well as the network of canals and ditches are very much in evidence as part of its **setting**. The site was chosen because of its inherent fertility and it thrives today because of its good drainage and deep sandy loam topsoil²⁶. The road system developed to connect to Wathau, Burgaw, and Wallace are still active. The road to Wathau, in fact, is still gravel. It is connected by roadway but sufficiently isolated to be primarily rural. The surrounding area is primarily managed for timber operations; so that the tree line always visible on the horizon defines and isolates this place.

The **design** elements are in evidence both on the community and the homestead levels. The assemblage of houses and outbuildings set in a network of fields overlaid with drainage ditches is a constant reminder of the small scale farming operations that were conceived for this place. It provides a consistent **setting** for the changes in homes and outbuildings. The home landscapes have continued to mature and have had additional structures like barns, storage buildings, and small scale silos added. The vegetation is fairly vernacular with foundation plantings, strategically placed shade trees, and the persistent home vegetable garden. The grape vines trained on simply crafted wood and

²⁶ Interview with Jimbo Robbins, Owner of a 1400 acre wholesale nursery partly on site, June 2010.

wire trellises are recognizable from the early pamphlets from the USDA. Occasional patches of flowers are a reminder of a now departed agriculture staple. Various “gleaned” elements in the landscape such as recycled concrete head walls at drive ways, improvised changes to buildings, or older tractors still in use on the individual holdings are reminders of a tradition of practical husbandry as well as conveying a convincing sense of local **materials** and homespun **workmanship**.

Perhaps the most pervasive sense of social space is maintained by the layout of roads leading to the community buildings. The horsehoe-shaped road conveys a intentionality that is significant. It is the **feeling** of the place from a sense of the pieces working together. It is the school, made accessible to everyone in the larger area. It is the volunteer fire station, now in its third building. It is the “Ruritan” located in one of these common buildings having regular meetings to focus on community projects. It is the recreational activities, visible in the large baseball field and children play area. It is even the abandoned factory, a reminder of the need to find a diversified way of making a living in fragile rural economies. It is, of course, the churches – originally meant to be one, now three, all working in their own way to enhance a special sense of place and of the possibilities of this time. Finally, it is the relative isolation without commercial enterprises and much traffic enhanced by the **setting** of distant treeline surrounding the property.

Finally, the **association** of the people who are long time residents to the land is very much in evidence. The Penderlea Museum at 284 Garden Road and yearly Penderlea days in June are testimonials to an ongoing tradition and sense of a special spot that is both people and place. Here you will find collections of Indian artifacts picked up on site, furnishings made by local craftsmen, depression era kitchen and laundry devices and equipment, memory collections such as photo albums with Mrs. Roosevelt’s photo, and early local, hand made quilts. It is set in a straightforward vernacular house that is light and open even by modern standards and the all important collection of outside buildings, grape arbor, shade tree, and a comfortable place to sit and talk.

IDENTIFYING CHANGES AND THREATS

The various changes to the design and management started even while the government was managing the properties. In 1943 the government allowed for the growing of small amounts, called allotments, of tobacco as a cash crop. They also set up

a Penderlea Farms Homestead Administration to undertake management of a proposed hosiery mill. Both these efforts were in an attempt to diversify the farmers' income and to allow them to be able to actually pay for the farms that they were leasing²⁷. It is, therefore, sometimes a complex matter to distinguish simple changes from threats.

The continued moving of structures to off-site, inappropriate remodeling, neglect, and abandonment are clearly threats. Trailers have moved in random lots as well as one street - Gail Street that has been subdivided for suburban houses in the 1980's. Several houses have been covered with aluminum siding and so altered as to be unrecognizable. The natural deterioration of the outbuildings, especially since the original long leaf pine lumber is virtually unavailable, is a concern.

The community sense of what is not part of the agricultural tradition that is Penderlea sees the advent of large industrial poultry farming as a negative. These operations have been growing over the last several decades and even spring from earlier chicken farming that took place on site well into the 1960's. The issue appears to be the size and industrial nature of the operation. Generally, these activities are considered inappropriate for Penderlea but are present especially along the edges.

In several instances, owners have abandoned their lands and allowed them to become overgrown. The potential obstruction to ditches and the difficulty in managing pests in this environment is a threat to the use of the land in other areas. This is especially true in the middle of the property where the overgrown lots threaten to separate Penderlea into two sections (Figure 11).

Finally, the lack of maintenance off site of Sills Creek and Rockfish Creek is potentially of great concern. The area has become infested lately with beavers that are blocking streams and making positive drainage problematic. Clean up efforts to date have been undertaken by the county but have proven to be haphazard and not addressed the beavers²⁸. Specific nonconforming uses or structures are highlighted in the Historic Survey.

CONTRIBUTING AND NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

²⁷ Conkin, p. 288.

²⁸ Multiple conversations with Ann Cottle, Jimbo Robbins, and Joe Carr, June 2010 as well as personal observation.

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The parcel-by-parcel inventory is summarized in the GIS map prepared for this area (See Figure 2). The plan serves to summarize a detailed inventory of each parcel and the extant buildings there. It divides the area into contributing, landscape and/or outbuilding contributing, and non-contributing parcels. In addition, Appendix 1 itemizes the parcels, acreage, and their structures' dates of construction with additional reference to owners' name, deed reference information, today tax codes, historic coding, and significance to the proposed historic district (1 for contributing; 2 for landscape/outbuilding contributing; or 3 for non-contributing).

A detailed summary analysis of what this means for the landscape is conveyed in the following preliminary chart (as of 8/8/2010):

Historic Designation	Number of parcels	% of total	Total acres	% of total	Age
Contributing	15	8.7%	1098	58%	1936-1953
Landscape/Outbuilding Outbuilding Contributing	22	12.6%	366	19.5%	1937-1990
Non-contributing	137	78.7%	425	22.5%	1980-today (with exceptions)
TOTAL	174	100%	1889	100%	

Summary of contributing landscape patterns

The fundamental landscape patterns are the development of a well-drained field system throughout the property which necessarily involves the drainage ditches and streams as well the clearing operation. These patterns exist as distinctive within this context of surrounding much larger timber farm operations. By breaking the landscape into the originally conceived 10 acre parcels, the **ditches** provide the essential agricultural infrastructure.

In addition, the **road layout** providing direct connections to surrounding market towns and centering on the **community facilities** is not only a distinctive landscape pattern, it has proven to be the heart of the community society and the focus of efforts to diversify the agricultural economy in the various buildings there. Finally, the pattern of existing streams and their overlay of the preexisting landscape reflecting not only land for **recreation** but effectively removing much of the **archeological resources** that were known from clearing and disruptive operations.

Non-Contributing Landscape Patterns

The encroachment of suburban development along Gail Road within the heart of the district in the 1980's does not contribute a sense of the rural landscape. In addition, the further development of modern industrial poultry operations in several of the existing tracts might also represent a radical departure from the pattern of smaller farms in the scale of the operations. In several instances, however, these tracts maintain a sense of the drainage and clearing and are therefore proposed for inclusion in the district. Finally, of great concern to the integrity of the farmstead operations is the overgrown parcels. They could serve to interrupt the established drainage design and make problematic the agriculture that is ongoing.

BOUNDARIES

The district northern edge abuts Sills Creek which runs east and southeast. Its eastern edge is a southerly flowing branch of Sills Creek referred to as the "Canal" and Bee Branch. The southern edge is defined roughly by a portion of Lake Road which roughly separates this watershed from its southern section draining into Horse Creek some three miles away. This somewhat more arbitrary edge was chosen despite the designation of considerably more area to the South because of the lack of built features reflecting the latter development of this area, the lack of extant homestead buildings in this southern portion, and its clear separation from the drainage watershed of the northern district. The western boundary is defined by another man-made canal and forested edge of large timber and poultry raising operations. The edges are defined consistently as it was originally designated by the US Government and exists to today by its clearing and its natural and manmade drainage features (See Figure 2). It also aligns with current property lines.

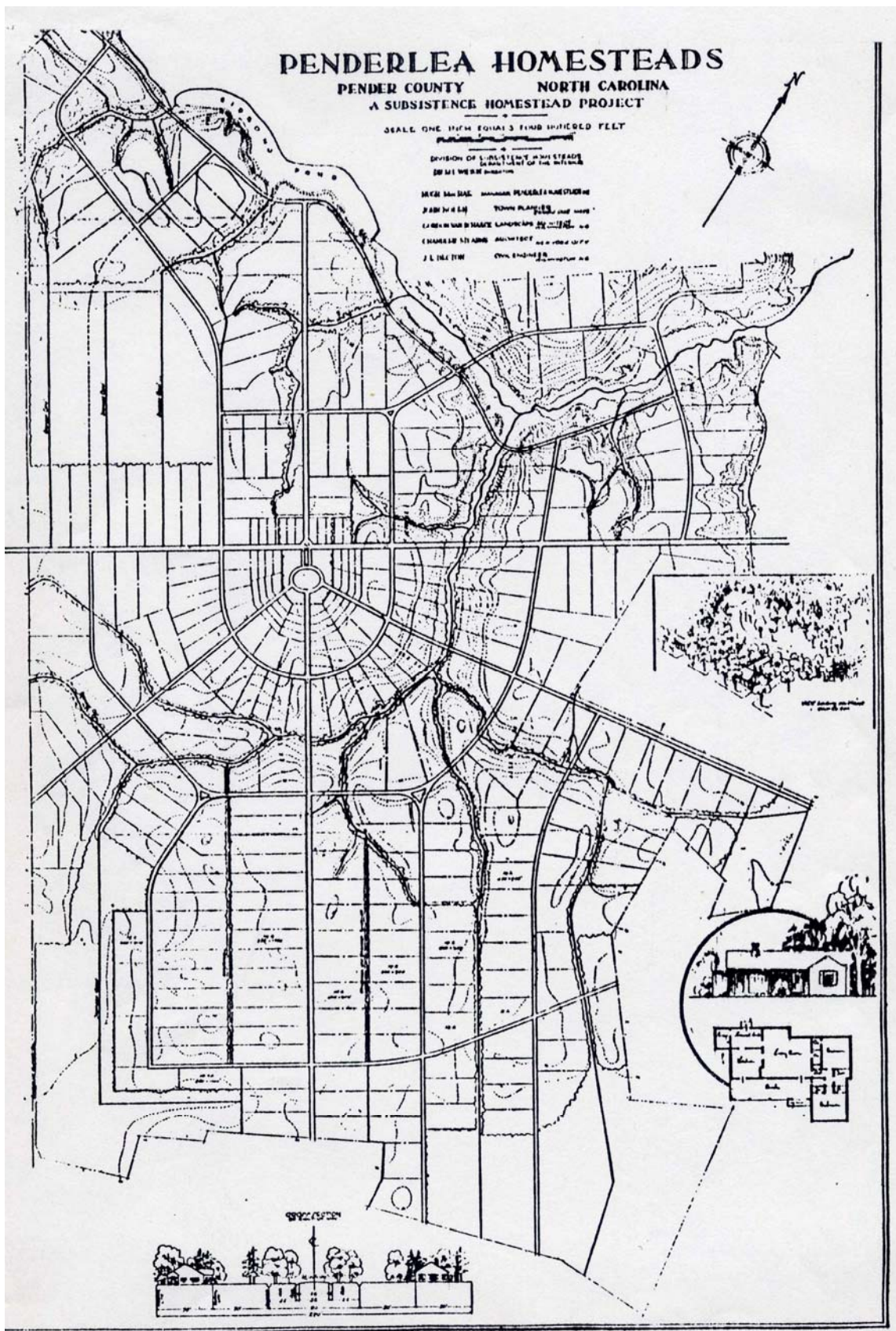
The additional area suggested includes an area to the south that reflects the landscape drainage pattern and was part of the later extension of the development. It also provides continuity up to Lamb Road as a defined boundary. Other areas that have inappropriate land uses still reflect the drainage patterns and clearing limits of the existing development. This includes the poultry farms on the western side (see Figure 12). There are also isolated areas in the center of the tract which by virtue of their

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proximity and the need to tie the sections of the area together effectively are suggested for inclusion as well.

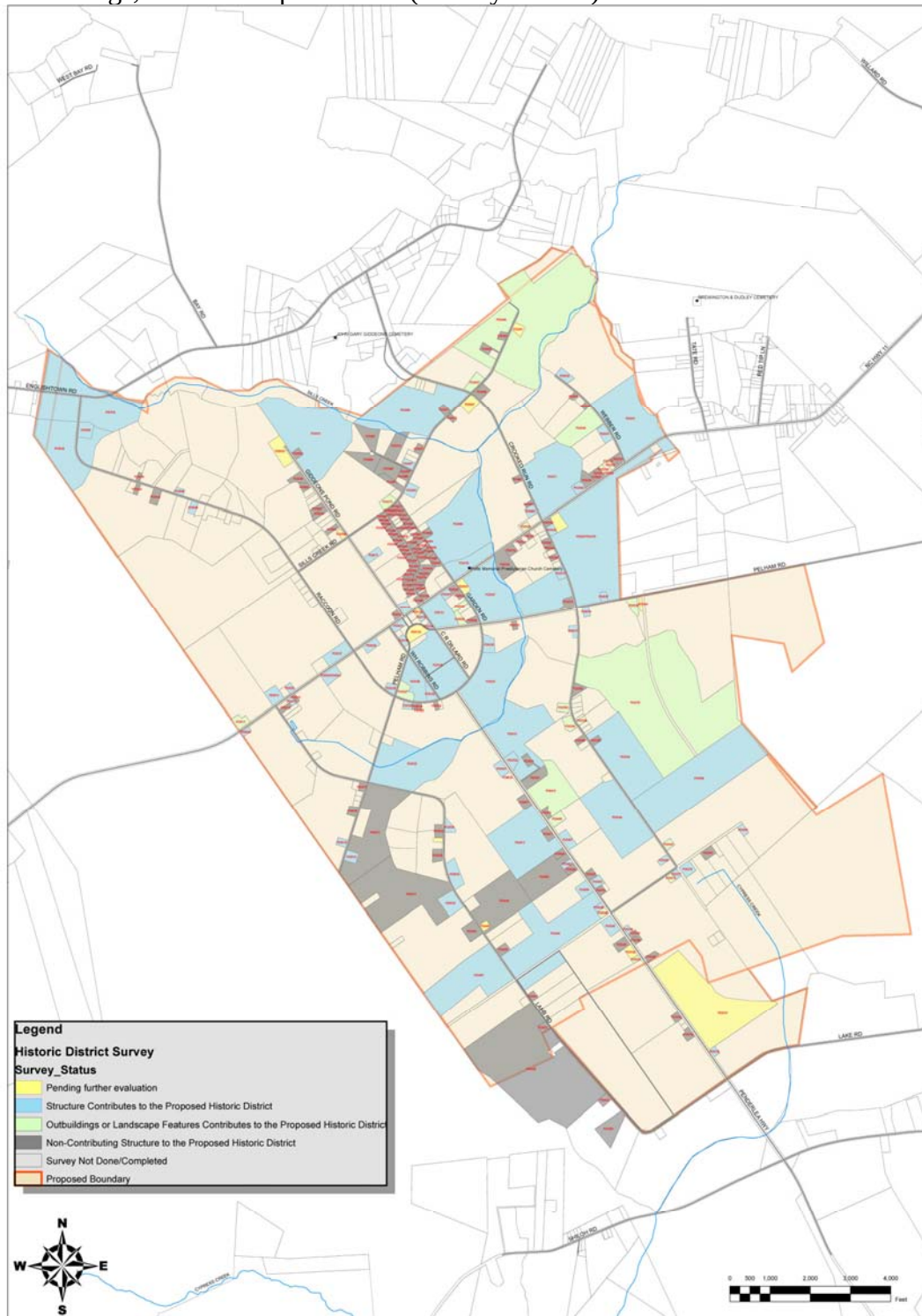
Thus, this proposal for the current boundary for the rural historic district reflects closely the original development. Even with the changes and threats to its integrity, it provides a setting that conveys continuing defining characteristics of smaller farms, diversified agriculture, and community structures. The other rural experiments in this portion of North Carolina exist only in relatively isolated fragments. It is here in Penderlea that one gets the clearest impression of the vision of “practical idealism” of the homesteaders and reformers of the Depression.

Figure 1: Nolen's Plan (Source: Penderlea Museum)



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Figure 2: GIS Plan of Penderlea with overlay showing significant structures, outbuildings, and landscape features (Plan by Author)



Penderlea National Register Survey

Historic Plan Overlay

August 5, 2010

Sidebottom Preservation, LLC; Ralph Muldrow, Sarah Fick, and James L. Ward

Figure 3: 1940's View of Development from water tower (Source: Penderlea Museum)



Figure 4: Typical assemblage of Buildings (Source: Penderlea Museum)



Figure 5: Government Issued Brochure to encourage small scale farming activities
(Source: Penderlea Museum)



Figure 6: Early efforts to improve the landscape of the farm (Source [http://memory.loc.gov/cgibin/
query/I?fsaall:26:./temp/~ammem_fp0U::displayType=1:m856sd=fsa:m856sf=8b26556:
@@@](http://memory.loc.gov/cgibin/query/I?fsaall:26:./temp/~ammem_fp0U::displayType=1:m856sd=fsa:m856sf=8b26556:@@@))



Figure 7: A modern rural farmstead assemblage reflecting the past (Photo by Author)



Figure 8: Overgrown Ditches today (photo by Author)



Figure 9: Aerial View Looking Southeast (Source: Google Earth)



Figure 10: Aerial View Looking Northwest (Source: Google Earth)



National Register Nomination Narrative for Landscape

Figure 11: Area Map

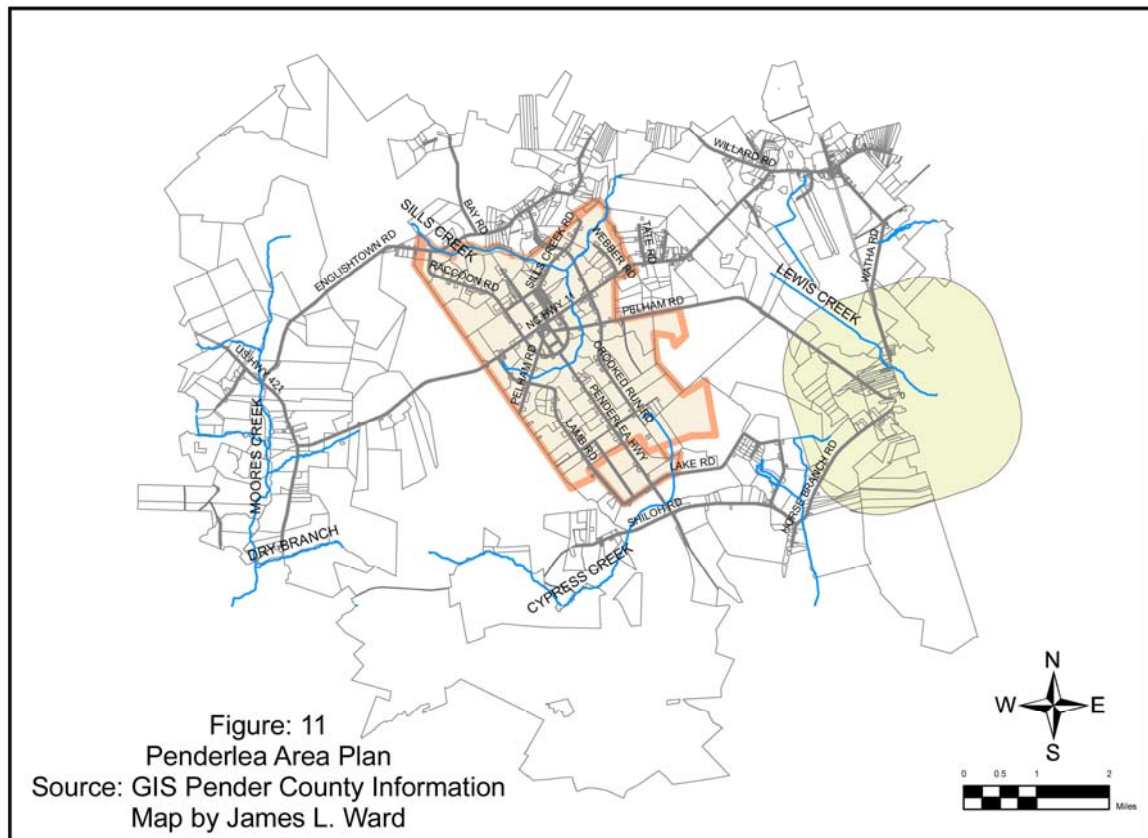


Figure 12: Aerial of typical historic assemblage of buildings (Source Pender County GIS)

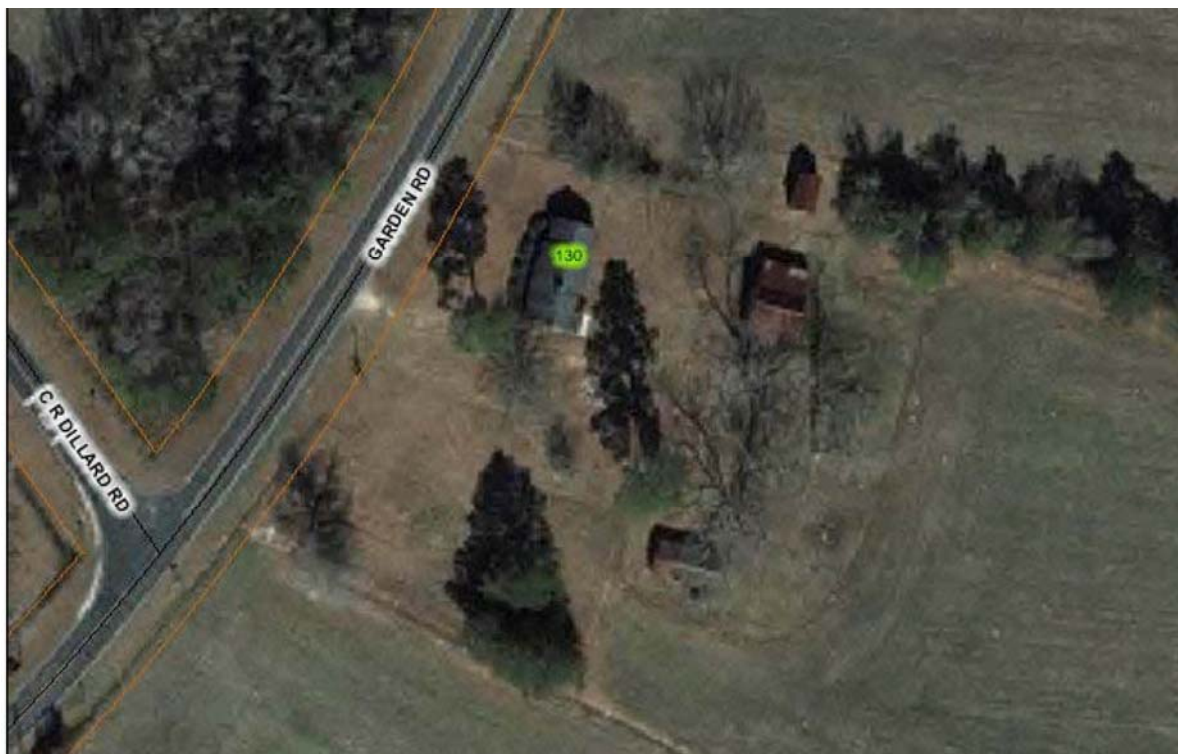


Figure 13: Aerial of chicken farming operation (Source Pender County GIS)



Figure 14: Aerial Photo (source information 2008 infrared photo from Pender County GIS)



Penderlea National Register Survey

PHASE ONE MAPPING

June 2, 2010

Sidebottom Preservation, LLC; Ralph Muldrow, Sarah Fick, and James L. Ward

Appendix: Complete List of New Deal Communities¹

Table 1. Communities planned and initiated by the Division of Subsistence Homesteads

Name	Location	Type	Units	Total cost	Unit cost
Arthurdale	Reedsville, W. Va.	Stranded community	165	\$2,744,724.09	\$16,635
Cumberland Homesteads	Crossville, Tenn.	Stranded community	262	3,267,345.10	12,471
Tygart Valley Homesteads	Elkins, W. Va.	Stranded community	195	2,080,213.99	10,668
Westmoreland Homesteads	Greensburg, Penn.	Stranded community	255	2,516,469.81	9,869
Jersey Homesteads	Hightstown, N.J.	Co-operative industrial	206	3,402,382.27	16,516
Penderlea Homesteads	Pender County, N. Car.	Farm community	195	2,277,685.60	11,680

¹ Most of the statistics in this Appendix were compiled from U.S. House of Representatives, Select Committee of the Committee on Agriculture, *Hearings on the Farm Security Administration*, 78th Cong., 1st Sess., 1943-1944, pp. 1118-1127.

Table 1. By the Division of Subsistence Homesteads (cont.)

Name	Location	Type	Units	Total cost	Unit cost
Piedmont Homesteads	Jasper County, Ga.	Farm community	50	649,650.88	12,993
Richton Homesteads	Richton, Miss.	Farm community	26	216,468.82	8,626
Shenandoah Homesteads	Five counties in Virginia	Resettlement communities			
		(seven)	160	1,060,125.49	6,626
Cahaba (Trussville Home- steads)	Near Birmingham, Ala.	Industrial (small garden city)	287	2,760,610.47	9,619
Austin Homesteads	Austin, Minn.	Industrial	44	213,227.87	4,846
Bankhead Farms	Jasper, Ala.	Industrial	100	1,046,420.80	10,464
Beauxart Gardens	Beaumont, Tex.	Industrial	50	143,027.62	2,861
Dalworthington Gardens	Arlington, Tex.	Industrial	79	325,712.35	4,123
Dayton Homesteads	Dayton, Ohio.	Industrial	35	50,000.00 (loan)	—
Decatur Homesteads	Decatur, Ind.	Industrial	48	157,279.94	3,277
Duluth Homesteads	Duluth, Minn.	Industrial	84	983,984.30	11,714
El Monte Homesteads	El Monte, Calif.	Industrial	100	292,476.81	2,925
Granger Homesteads	Granger, Iowa	Industrial	50	216,189.87	4,324
Greenwood Homesteads	Near Birmingham, Ala.	Industrial	83	827,835.27	9,974
Hattiesburg Homesteads	Hattiesburg, Miss.	Industrial	24	75,648.78	3,152
Houston Gardens	Houston, Tex.	Industrial	100	283,568.10	2,836
Lake County Homesteads	Chicago, Ill.	Industrial	53	554,745.53	10,469
Longview Homesteads	Longview, Wash.	Industrial	60	194,097.52	3,235
Magnolia Homesteads	Meridian, Miss.	Industrial	25	73,556.46	2,942
McComb Homesteads	McComb, Miss.	Industrial	20	91,452.52	4,573
Mount Olive Homesteads	Near Birmingham, Ala.	Industrial	75	618,162.84	8,242
Palmerdale Homesteads	Near Birmingham, Ala.	Industrial	102	938,865.08	9,205

Table 1. By the Division of Subsistence Homesteads (cont.)

Name	Location	Type	Units	Total cost	Unit cost
Phoenix Homesteads	Phoenix, Ariz.	Industrial	25	104,859.28	4,194
San Fernando Homesteads	Reseda, Calif.	Industrial	40	102,065.23	2,552
Three Rivers Gardens	Three Rivers, Tex.	Industrial	50	162,943.43	3,259
Tupelo Homesteads	Tupelo, Miss.	Industrial	35	139,247.12	3,978
Wichita Gardens	Wichita Falls, Tex.	Industrial	62	187,527.85	3,025
Aberdeen Gardens	Newport News, Va.	Garden city for Negroes	159	1,353,896.29	8,515
Totals for all 34 subsistence homesteads communities			3,304	\$30,112,467.38	\$9,114

Table 2. Communities planned or initiated by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration

Name	Location	Type	Units	Total cost	Unit cost
Dyess Colony	Mississippi County, Ark.	Farm community	275 *	\$2,306,250.00 †	\$8,386
Cherry Lake Farms	Near Madison, Fla.	Farm and rural industrial	132 *	1,913,811.00 †	14,499
Pine Mountain Valley	Harris County, Ga.	Farm and rural industrial	205 *	2,207,572.00 †	10,769
Burlington Project	Burlington, N. Dak.	Stranded community	35	213,172.15	6,091
Red House	Red House, W. Va.	Stranded community	150	1,506,397.82	10,043
Albert Lea Homesteads	Albert Lea, Minn.	Industrial	14	38,160.68	2,726
Arizona Part-Time Farms	Phoenix, Ariz.	Industrial	91	564,013.05	6,198
Fairbury Farmsteads	Jefferson County, Neb.	Farm village	11	67,895.87	6,172
Fall City Farmsteads	Richardson County, Neb.	Farm village	10	102,755.42	10,276
Grand Island Farmsteads	Hall County, Neb.	Farm village	10	68,126.52	6,813

* As of 1943, after many consolidations.

† The original investment of the FERA. This does not include later expenditures.

Table 2. By the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (cont.)

Name	Location	Type	Units	Total cost	Unit cost
Kearney Homesteads	Buffalo County, Neb.	Farm village	10	98,238.96	9,824
Loup City Farmsteads	Sherman County, Neb.	Farm village	11	101,281.82	9,207
Scottsbluff Farmsteads	Scottsbluff County, Neb.	Farm village	23	231,520.02	10,276
Sioux Falls Farms	Minnehaha County, S. Dak.	Farm village	14	218,660.71	15,619
South Sioux City Farmsteads	Dakota County, Neb.	Farm village	22	115,395.98	5,245
Two Rivers Farmsteads	Douglas and Saunders counties, Neb.	Farm village	40	547,746.49	13,694
Woodlake Community	Wood County, Tex.	Farm village	101	648,255.81	6,418
Ashwood Plantation	Lee County, S. Car.	Farm community	161	1,874,268.56	11,641
Bosque Farms	Valencia County, N. Mex.	Farm community	42	677,725.45	16,136
Chicot Farms	Chicot and Drew counties, Ark.	Farm community	85	578,338.60	6,804
Irwinville	Irwin County, Ga.	Farm community	105	899,815.34	8,571
Roanoke Farms	Halifax County, N. Car.	Farm community	294	2,191,568.39	7,454
Ropesville Farms	Hockley County, Tex.	Farm community	76	667,489.03	8,783
Scuppernon Farms	Tyrell and Washington counties, N. Car.	Farm community	127	779,327.49	6,136
Skyline Farms	Jackson County, Ala.	Farm community	181	1,230,333.06	6,797
St. Francis River Farms	Poinsett County, Ark.	Farm community	86	546,767.43	6,358
Wichita Valley Farms	Wichita County, Tex.	Farm community	91	931,086.53	10,243
Wolf Creek	Grady County, Ga.	Farm community	24	233,351.21	9,723
Totals for all 28 Federal Emergency Relief Administration communities			2,426	\$21,559,325.39	\$ 8,887

Table 3. Communities initiated by the Resettlement Administration

Name	Location	Type	Units	Total cost	Unit cost
Greenbelt	Berwyn, Md. (near Washington D.C.)	Garden city	890	\$13,701,817.17	\$15,395
Greendale	Milwaukee, Wis.	Garden city	640	10,638,465.62	16,623
Greenhills	Cincinnati, Ohio	Garden city	737	11,860,627.53	16,093
Ironwood Homesteads	Ironwood, Mich.	Small garden city	132	1,373,138.48	10,403
Drummond Project	Bayfield County, Wis.	Forest homesteads	32	246,376.88	7,699
Sublimity Farms	Laurel County, Ky.	Forest homesteads	66	419,824.85	6,361
Casa Grande Valley Farms	Pinal County, Ariz.	Co-operative farm	60	817,548.17	11,959
Lake Dick	Jefferson and Arkansas counties, Ark.	Co-operative farm	97	663,850.81	6,844
Terrebonne	Terrebonne Parish, La.	Co-operative plantation	73	514,504.21	7,048
Biscoe Farms	Prairie County, Ark.	Farm community	77	373,224.39	4,847
Christian-Trigg Farms	Christian County, Ky.	Farm community	106	971,424.99	9,164
Clover Bend Farms	Lawrence County, Ark.	Farm community	91	483,534.82	5,314
Desha Farms	Desha and Drew counties, Ark.	Farm community	88	511,872.94	5,817
Escambia Farms	Okaloosa County, Fla.	Farm community	81	585,818.99	7,232
Flint River Farms	Macon County, Ga.	Farm community	146	727,611.42	4,984
Gee's Bend Farms	Wilcox County, Ala.	Farm community	100	418,505.30	4,185
Hinds Farms	Hinds County, Miss.	Farm community	81	294,484.96	3,636
Kinsey Flats	Custer County, Mont.	Farm community	80	874,741.08	10,934
La Forge Farms	New Madrid County, Mo.	Farm community	101	769,534.69	7,619
Lakeview Farms	Lee and Phillips counties, Ark.	Farm community	141	899,652.21	6,381
Lonoke Farms	Lonoke County, Ark.	Farm community	57	254,484.84	4,465

Table 3. By the Resettlement Administration (cont.)

Name	Location	Type	Units	Total cost	Unit cost
Lucedale Farms	George and Greene counties, Miss.	Farm community	93	449,945.75	4,838
McLennan Farms	McLennan County, Tex.	Farm community	20	244,050.17	12,203
Mileston Farms	Holmes County, Miss.	Farm community	110	744,721.40	6,770
Mounds Farms	Madison and East Carroll parishes, La.	Farm community	149	803,616.30	5,393
Orangeburg Farms	Orangeburg and Calhoun Counties, S. Car.	Farm community	80	535,518.55	6,694
Osage Farms	Pettis County, Mo.	Farm community	86	976,055.87	11,349
Pembroke Farms	Robeson County, N. Car.	Farm community	75	613,267.98	8,177
Plum Bayou	Jefferson County, Ark.	Farm community	200	1,634,921.84	8,175
Prairie Farms	Macon County, Ala.	Farm community	34	201,683.79	5,932
Sabine Farms	Harrison County, Tex.	Farm community	80	436,674.00	5,458
Saginaw Valley Farms	Saginaw County, Mich.	Farm community	33	365,958.14	11,090
Sam Houston Farms	Harris County, Tex.	Farm community	86	607,777.78	7,067
Tiverton Farms	Sumter County, S. Car.	Farm community	29	117,987.93	4,069
Townes Farms	Crittenden County, Ark.	Farm community	37	163,733.93	4,425
Transylvania Farms	East Carroll Parish, La.	Farm community	163	847,640.34	5,200
Trumann Farms	Poinsett County, Ark.	Farm community	57	278,937.13	4,894
Totals for all 37 Resettlement Administration communities			5,208	\$56,423,535.25	\$10,834
Grand totals for all 99 communities			10,938	\$108,095,328.02	\$ 9,691