NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

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NATIONAL REGISTER

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Old Strother Place

other names/site number Fruit Hill

2. Location

street & number Rt. 3, Box 84 not for publication ___
city or town Saluda vicinity XX
state South Carolina code SC county Saluda code 81
zip code 29138

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide X locally.
(___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mary W. Edmonds 1/7/94
Signature of certifying official Date

Mary W. Edmonds, Deputy SHPO, S.C. Department of Archives & History, Columbia, S.C.

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

(___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

✓ entered in the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.

___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain): _____

Guy M. Lapsley 2/25/94 Entered in the National Register

for Signature of Keeper Date

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- X private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- X district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
4	3	buildings
		sites
1		structures
		objects
5	3	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
Domestic	Single dwelling
Domestic	Kitchen
Domestic	Secondary structure
Agriculture	Animal facility
Industry/Processing/Extraction	Water tower

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
Domestic	Single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Mid-19th Century/Greek Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone
roof metal
walls wood/weatherboard
other

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- X C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

____ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
____ B removed from its original location.
____ C a birthplace or a grave.
____ D a cemetery.
____ E a reconstructed building, object,or structure.
____ F a commemorative property.
____ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)
Architecture

Period of Significance
1856 - 1943

Significant Dates
1856
c. 1936

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
George James Strother

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)
___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
___ previously listed in the National Register
___ previously determined eligible by the National Register
___ designated a National Historic Landmark
___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary Location of Additional Data
X State Historic Preservation Office
X Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
X Other
Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 11.85 acres

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	421020	3756850	3	17	420920	3756460
2	17	421060	3756540	4	17	420640	3756880

__ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Katherine H. Richardson

organization Heritage Preservation Associates date October 1, 1993

street & number P.O. Box 5502 telephone 803-775-6682

city or town Columbia state SC zip code 29250

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Patricia W. Rawl, William T. Rawl, Thomas H. Rawl

street & number 1347 Counts Ferry Rd. telephone 803-359-4659

city or town Lexington state SC zip code 29072

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

The Old Strother Place is a ca. 1856 plantation complex containing the ca. 1856 Greek Revival house, kitchen building, and barn, as well as later buildings and structures. It is located in rural Saluda County, which was once part of Edgefield District. The complex occupies 11.85 acres between Fruit Hill Road and Chappels Ferry Road, on an undivided parcel of the original 1,456 acre Strother plantation. The Strothers were affluent planters in the district and the house and complex represent one of the few remaining examples of the large plantations of Edgefield District. The following is the list of cultural resources at the Old Strother Place.

1. Old Strother Place House. Built ca. 1856. Contributing.

The Old Strother House is a mixture of high style and practical, plain elements. It is a gable-end, two-story house clad in weatherboard. Both the front and rear facades are five-ranked, with a centrally placed door on the first floor of each elevation, above which is a 6/6 window flanked by transon and side lights. The house originally had one-story, full-facade, shed roofed porches on both the rear and front elevations. The porch on the rear facade was enclosed in the twentieth century. The porches are supported by simple square posts and originally had no balusters, though a simple wooden baluster was added to the front porch after a child's baby buggy rolled off of the porch, causing the death of the infant. A portion of the front porch was also screened in the twentieth century. The doors on both the front and rear elevations were originally simple, two-panneled wooden doors surrounded by a transom and side lights. An office in the house is entered on the western facade. This entry has an significant one-story, gable-front portico supported by two pairs of simple, square posts like those supporting the full-facade porches. This portico adds great style to the western elevation of the house, which faces Fruit Hill Road. The houses has 9/9 windows on the first floor and 6/6 windows on the second level. A small window with modern windows is located in each gable end of the attic; the gable-ends are clad in wood shingles. The house has two interior chimneys and the roof is clad in metal. The house rests on stone piers.

The interior of the house is simply, yet tastefully appointed. In the central hall a semi-circular arch rests on fluted pilasters, creating an entry hall at the front door. The stairs have a simple railing supported by plain square balusters. The tread-ends of the steps display a simple, carved decorative detail. The walls of the formal rooms retain their original plaster, while the hall walls are clad in painted flush boards. The central hall has a simple chair rail with a plain dado. The parlor has no chair rail but has a syma recta cornice. The mantel in the parlor has a substantial

mantel shelf supported by a wooden mantel decorated with carved paterae in recessed panels. The mantel in the office has the same substantial mantel shelf as that in the parlor and the wooden mantel is adorned by recessed panels. The office has only a simple, narrow cornice. The house has handsome, wide baseboards and the door and window surrounds throughout the house display Greek Revival surrounds. The house rests in its historic landscape. It is surrounded by old plantings and the view on all sides of the house presents the rural scene of rolling hills, orchards, and agricultural fields.

2. Barn. Built ca. 1856. Contributing.

This gable-end barn with two shed additions to the central mass has shed-roof additions to the west side and to the southern side. The main part of the barn is of vertical board construction; the shed additions are covered with horizontal boards. It has a metal roof and a partial concrete foundation.

3. Garage. Built ca. 1930. Contributing.

This gable-end building is covered in weatherboard and has a metal roof.

4. Water tower. Built ca. 1936. Contributing.

This metal water tower has a wooden windmill and a metal water tank and cement footings.

5. Old Kitchen Building with Shed Additions. Kitchen built ca. 1856; Sheds ca. 1940. Non-contributing.

This original kitchen building has been moved and added on to through the years; its integrity has been substantially compromised. It was originally a gable-end building clad in weatherboard and roofed in metal. It was subsequently moved and used as a smoke house and a cotton storage building. Metal shed-roofed additions to the kitchen building, built ca. 1940, span the northern and western elevations.

6. Chicken Coop. Built ca. 1950. Non-contributing.

7. Doghouse. Built ca. 1950. Non-contributing.

8. Greenhouse. ca. 1980. Non-contributing.

9. Arbor. ca. 1950. Non-contributing.

The Old Strother Place is a notable example of Greek Revival architecture and qualifies for the National Register under criterion C. It was built ca. 1856 by George James Strother on 1,456 acres granted to him in 1854 by the state of South Carolina. This was the "new" house on the plantation; Strother had an older house on another section of the place which predated his acquisition of this part of the plantation. The extant barn and kitchen building were constructed at the same time, according to family tradition. The complex stands on the remaining undivided 13.55 acres of the original Strother tract. The Old Strother Place was one of the largest plantation houses in the area and it represents the prosperity of the large planters in Edgefield County prior to the Civil War, when Edgefield District led the state in animal and crop production and the district contained the largest improved farm acreage in the state between 1850 and 1860. The Old Strother Place was the first in the vicinity to receive electricity and have running water, when, in ca. 1936, the Strother family took advantage of the Rural Electrification Administration's financing for electric systems on farms across America. In 1935, only eleven out of every one hundred farms in the United States had electricity; the Strothers were one of the first to take advantage of this program in the entire country. The house and its outbuildings have remained in the family since 1856. The land surrounding the complex retains the historical landscape of open agricultural fields and fruit orchards and the buildings retain their historical integrity. The Old Strother Place is one of the last intact large plantation complexes in this area of Saluda County.[1]

The Old Strother Place stands on a hill overlooking an agricultural field to its south and upon acres of fruit orchards to its north and east. It is in a fork of land between Chappells Ferry Road and Fruit Hill Road in rural Saluda County, several miles south of Richardsonville, in an area known as Plum Branch. This area was once a part of Edgefield County/District until the formation of Saluda County in 1895 and thus is identified with the history of the Edgefield District. The land upon which it stands is a small part of the 1,456 acres which the state of South Carolina granted to George James Strother in 1854. Strother had received 818 acres of this tract in 1847 by a state grant and his first house stood on that tract, which lay east of the Strother

[1]State Plats II, vol. 56, p. 391, S. C. Dept. of Archives and History [hereafter SCDAH], Columbia, S. C.; Orville Vernon Burton, In My Father's House are Many Mansions: Family and Community in Edgefield, South Carolina, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), p. 35; Oral History Interview with Patricia W. Rawl, February, 1993; Richard E. Dodd, Strother and Some Allied Lines, n.p., 1980, p. I-82; World Book Encyclopedia, vol. 16, (Field Enterprises Corporation, 1971), pp. 482-3.

Place on Stevens Creek.[2] The newer house built at the Old Strother Place ca. 1856 represents the prosperity enjoyed by this prominant Edgefield County planter in the years prior to the Civil War.

The Strother family has been in this area of Edgefield County for many generations. George James's father, whose name he carried, obtained 999 acres of land on the northern branch of Penn Creek, just south of Richardsonville, in 1815. Strother's mother was a Richardson and both families were influential planters in the area.[3]

George James Strother, born on October 12, 1815, was the son of George James Strother and the grandson of David Richardson. On May 20, 1838, he married Eloise E. Bates (1820-1886), the daughter of Col. John Bates, who owned the land where the town of Batesburg now stands. They had three daughters and five sons. Strother was a teacher and surveyor early in his career. He very likely taught at the school which stood, in 1854, on his plantation next to School Spring on Pen Creek. The site of this school is just east of a pond near the present Fruit Hill Community Center. During the Civil War, Strother served as a Lieutenant in the Confederate Army, in Company G of the 7th South Carolina Infantry. In his old age he moved to Johnston, S. C., where he died on February 23, 1881. He is buried at the Mount of Olives Cemetery in Johnston.[4]

The house and outbuildings passed into the ownership of George James Strother's son, James George Strother (1848-1918), upon his death in 1881. After James George's death, the property went to his daughter, Ruby Rochelle (b. 1889). She married William Clarence Branch on December 22, 1914 and the couple spent the rest of their lives at the Old Strother Place. The Branch's daughter, Trudith Bryce (1917-1992) inherited the place after her parents' decease.[5]

Edgefield District (later County) was described by Robert Mills in 1825. He wrote,

> There is nothing that distinguishes Edgefield from that of other districts in the upper and middle country. They were all gradually settled as the tide of emigration rolled from the north and east. It however may be observed of this, in contradistinction to some other

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[2]State Plats II, vol. 56, p. 391, SCDAH; State Plats II, vol. 55, pp. 20-1, SCDAH.

[3]State Plats II, vol. 44, p. 64, SCDAH.

[4]Dodd, p. I-82; State Plats II, vol. 56, p. 391, SCDAH.

[5]Oral History Interview with Patricia W. Rawl, February, 1993.

> districts, which were peopled a good deal by foreigners and their immediate descendants ... that Edgefield was settled principally, and indeed almost altogether, by emigrants from Virginia and North Carolina ...[6]

Edgefield contained excellent farm land. Mills noted that peas, sweet potatoes, beans, tobacco, wheat, rye, barley, oats, Irish potatoes, hemp, corn, and cotton grew well there.[7] Orville V. Burton, a contemporary Edgefield historian, notes that "most of the wealth of Edgefield derived from agriculture." His description of the district indicates the productivity of the land:

> Antebellum plantations in up-country Edgefield were more rustic than the typical low-country plantations. The up-country plantation economy was also more diversified, producing timber and more corn, oats, wheat, rye, barley and other grains than those in the low country ... in 1850 and 1860. Edgefield led the state in animal and crop production. The value of Edgefield's livestock, the number of horses, mules, asses, and swine, and the value of animals slaughtered were greater than those of other districts ... With the largest improved farm acreage in the state in 1850 and 1860, Edgefield was either first or second in cotton, orchard, oat, Irish potato, and corn production. In 1850 Edgefield was third in the value of produce from market gardens and led the state in the value of homemade manufactures, an index of self-sufficiency.[8]

The Strother plantation was by far one of the largest in the vicinity, with 450 acres of improved land and 850 acres of unimproved land in 1850. In 1850, George James Strother owned five horses, five asses, ten milk cows, two working oxen, thirty head of cattle, twenty-five sheep, and eighty hogs. He was one of the largest livestock owners in the area, reflecting the trend toward large livestock production in Edgefield District. The produce of the Strother plantation reflects the success of Edgefield District in leading the agricultural output in the state during the years of 1850 and 1860. The plantation produced 100 bushels of wheat, 1,500 bushels of Indian corn, 600

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[6]Robert Mills, Statistics of South Carolina (Spartanburg: The Reprint Co., 1972), pp. 519-20.

[7]Ibid., pp. 521-2.

[8]Burton, p. 35.

bushels of oats, 6 pounds of rice, 47 bales of ginned cotton (equal to 18,800 pounds), 50 pounds of wool, 25 bushels of peas, 40 pounds of Irish potatoes, 200 pounds of sweet potatoes, and 1,000 pounds of butter in 1850. In addition Strother declared $250 additional value of homemade manufactures.[9]

In 1850, Strother owned twenty-seven slaves; in 1860 the slave population on the Old Strother Place had increased to forty-three Afro-Americans. Strother had eight slave houses on his plantation; the location of the slave houses is unknown at this time.[10] The 1860 Census lists George James Strother as a "farmer" with the value of his real estate at $14,200. His personal worth was $51,595 in 1860.[11]

In the aftermath of the Civil War production on the Strother plantation was scaled down. Strother had acquired 200 additional acres between 1850 and 1870, yet his land was worth only $4,500 in 1870, as opposed to $14,200 before the war. Strother's livestock was reduced to three horses, three mules, five milk cows, ten head of cattle, and twenty pigs. Of course, the reduced labor force had its effect on the quantity of produce from the place, though Strother remained one of the highest producers in his neighborhood. In 1870, Strother grew 100 bushels of spring wheat, 300 bushels of Indian corn, 100 bushels of oats, 13 bales of cotton (equalling 5,850 pounds), and produced 100 pounds of butter.[12]

George James Strother spent his last years in the town of Johnston, and apparently his son, James George, ran the plantation. In 1880, the Old Strother Place was surrounded by only 700 acres. James George hired farm laborers to assist him on the place for 150 weeks, probably indicating that he had three men on the place either as tenant farmers or straight laborers. The Strother declared $2,000 worth of produce sold in 1879, far surpassing the value of agricultural produce raised by his neighbors. In 1879, James George Strother grew 200 bushels of Indian corn on twenty-five acres, fifteen bushels of oats on two acres, thirty bales of cotton on thirty acres, grew enough sorghum to produce fifty gallons of molasses, and raised forty bushels of potatoes. The number of livestock was greatly reduced, yet even with only two milk cows the place produced 100 pounds of butter. For the first time, poultry

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[9]1850 Agricultural Census of the United States, Edgefield District, Microfilm frames 297-8, SCDAH.

[10]1850 Slave Schedule, p. 73, Edgefield District, SCDAH; 1860 Slave Schedule, p. 43, Saluda Regiment, Edgefield District, SCDAH.

[11]1860 Census of the United States, Fruit Hill Post Office, Edgefield District, p. 148 A & B, SCDAH.

[12]1870 Agricultural Census of the United States, Edgefield District, frame 732, SCDAH.

were indicated on the census and Strother declared thirty laying hens and 100 eggs produced in 1879.[13]

This agricultural record spanning thirty years indicates that the Strothers were always successful and affluent planters, despite the interruption of the Civil War and the impact of Reconstruction. This prosperity is reflected in the house built by George James Strother ca. 1856. The large, imposing house was unusual in this district where most built conservative, plain buildings, according to Edgefield historian Orville V. Burton. He writes of the grander homes of the wealthy planters,

> In contrast [to the plainer houses], financed by the success of commercialized cotton production (made possible by slavery, the cotton gin, and improved transportation), the wealthy Edgefield plantation owners built elaborate and impressive mansions for themselves after 1830. The mansions, which were definitely the exception rather than the rule for both antebellum and postbellum whites, became beautiful artifacts, large and grand, as imposing as the people who built them. Two or three stories with broad front porches, these buildings reflected the symmetrical theories of Georgian styles. Open piazzas greeted those of equal social status.[14]

The Old Strother House is a mixture of high style and practical, plain elements. The original barn and kitchen building remain in the back of the house. A garage built in c. 1935 stands behind the house as well. The roads which pass the house on either side pre-date 1825.

In c. 1936, the house was the first in the vicinity to receive electricity and running water, as a result of the Rural Electrification Administration's program. This Administration, run under the Department of Agriculture, was established by executive order of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1935. In 1936, Congress approved the Rural Electrification Act, which provided for a ten-year electrification program for America's rural areas. James Strother Branch, the present owner's uncle, had just graduated from Clemson University in 1936 with a degree in electrical engineering and he utilized the loan program to electrify the Old Strother Place and add running water. The resulting water tank still stands in the yard to the east of the house.[15]

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[13]1880 Agricultural Census of the United States, Edgefield District, frame 387, SCDAH.

[14]Burton, p. 39.

[15]World Book Encyclopedia, vol. 16, pp. 482-3; Oral History Interview with Patricia W. Rawl, June, 1993.

Over time, the Old Strother Place has continued to produce cotton, staple crops, and fruit, thus retaining its historical function. It is a stately reminder of the prosperity of the affluent planters of Edgefield District and its history serves as a microcosm of the development of the larger plantations in Edgefield. It is a treasured landmark both for the area once encompassed by Edgefield District and the later-formed Saluda County.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

South Carolina State Plats
South Carolina State Grants
United States Censuses
United States Agricultural Censuses
United States Censuses, Slave Schedules

Secondary Sources

Burton, Orville Vernon. In My Father's House Are Many Mansions: Family and Community in Edgefield County, South Carolina. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985.

Dodd, Richard E. Strother and Some Allied Family Lines. n.p., 1980.

Field Enterprises Corporation. World Book Encyclopedia, vol. 16, 1971.

Mills, Robert. Statistics of South Carolina. Spartanburg: The Reprint Company, 1972.

Oral History Interviews

Interview with Patricia Rawl, February, 1993.

Verbal Boundary Description

The property lays in a fork between Chappels Ferry Road and Fruit Hill Road in Saluda County. The line begins at an iron boundary marker on the edge of Chappells Ferry Road and follows the right of way south along the road for 1,127.98 feet, then the line turns in a a southwesterly direction for 310.01 feet until it intersects with a point in the middle of Fruit Hill Road. From there it travels in a northerly direction down the center line of Fruit Hill Road for 1,632.47 feet, at which point it runs in a southeasterly direction for 706.75 feet to the first iron boundary marker on Chappells Ferry Road.

Boundary Justification

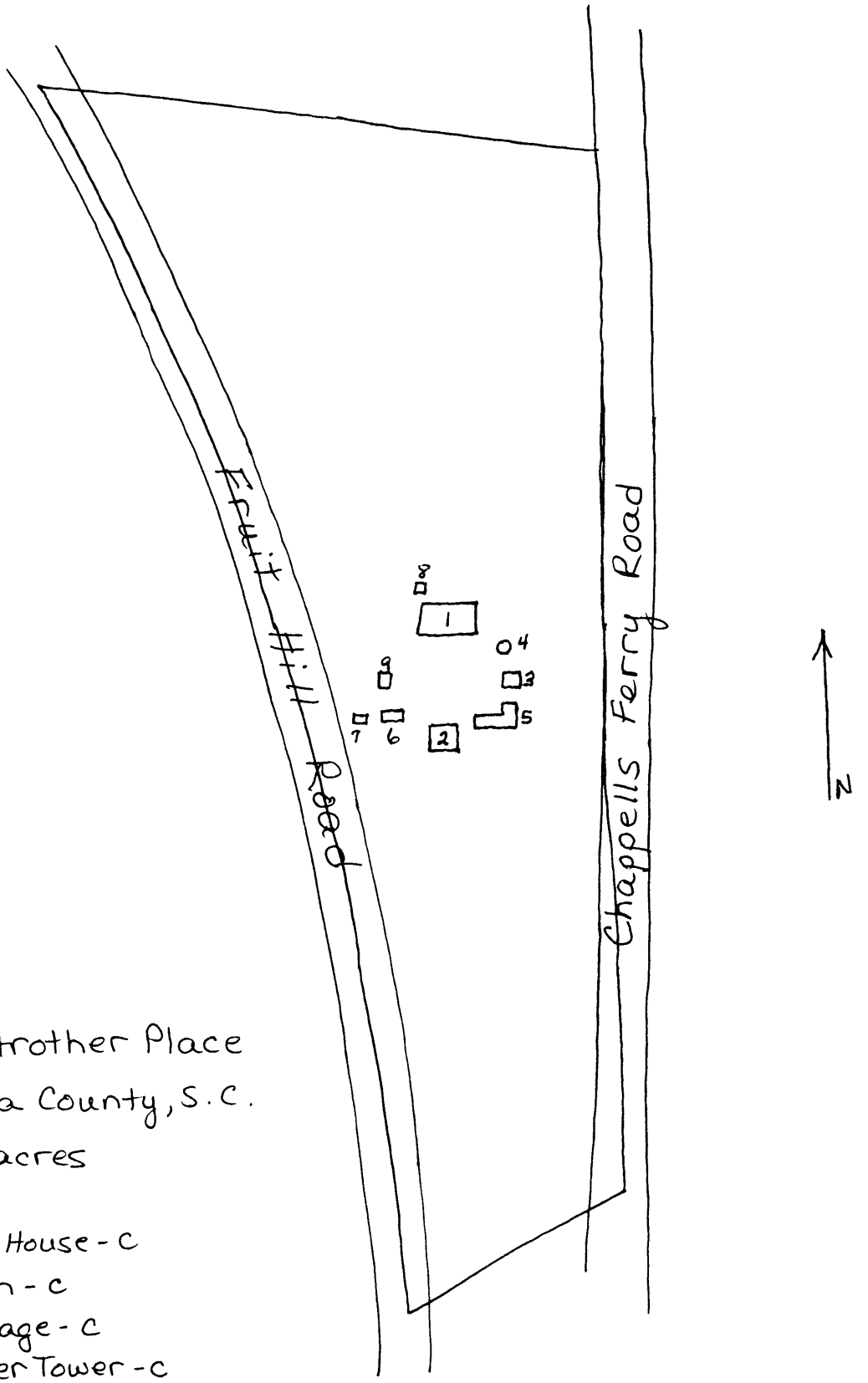
This 11.85 acres constitutes the portion of The Old Strother Place containing the plantation complex. The rest of the plantation has been divided among heirs.

Photographs:

The following information applies to all of the photographs of the Old Strother Place:

Location: Saluda Co., S. C.
Photographer: Katherine H. Richardson
Date: May, 1993
Location of the Negatives: S. C. Dept. of Archives and History

1. Old Strother House, front elevation facing south.
2. Old Strother House, western elevation facing east.
3. Old Strother House, eastern facade facing west.
4. Old Strother House, southern elevation facing north.
5. Entrance to Office, western elevation facing east.
6. Front doors in central hall facing north.
7. Central hall and stairs facing north.
8. Detail of decorative work on stairs facing west.
9. Second floor central hallway facing north.
10. Office/parlor on northwestern corner of the first floor facing west.
11. Mantel in eastern parlor facing southeast.
12. Water Tower facing southeast.
13. Barn facing south.
14. Old Kitchen Building/shed facing southeast.
15. Chicken Coop facing southeast.
16. Garage facing east.
17. Arbor facing west.
18. James George Strother (1848-1918).



Old Strother Place
Saluda County, S.C.
11.85 acres

1. Main House - C
2. Barn - C
3. Garage - C
4. Water Tower - C
5. Old Kitchen Building - N/C
6. Chicken Coop - N/C
7. Dog House - N/C
8. Greenhouse - N/C
9. Arbor - N/C