

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received JAN 12 1987

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Westover

and or common same

2. Location

street & number 151 Meriwether Road, N. W.

N/A not for publication

city, town Milledge

vicinity of

state Georgia

code 013

county Baldwin

code 009

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Thulia L. Bramlett

street & number 10725 Monroe Road

city, town Arlington

N/A vicinity of

state TN 38002

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Superior Court

street & number Baldwin County Courthouse

city, town Milledgeville

state GA

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

(a) Historic Structures Field Survey: Baldwin County, GA.
title (b) Historic American Bldgs. Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date (a) 1976 (b) federal (a) state county local
(b) 1935

depository for survey records (a) Georgia Department of Natural Resources
(b) Division of Prints and Photography, Library of Congress

city, town (a) Atlanta (a) Georgia
(b) Washington state (b) D.C.

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Westover consists of the historic outbuildings, formally landscaped grounds, and unmarked slave cemetery associated with an antebellum plantation in rural central Georgia. The plantation house burned in 1954 and has been replaced on the same foundations by a non-historic reproduction.

Westover is located on 40 acres of lower Piedmont countryside approximately 5 miles north of Milledgeville, Georgia's early 19th-century capital city. It is set in a rural environment of diversified topographic character featuring irregular low ridges, eroded slopes, and creek bottoms. In spite of its proximity to Milledgeville, the immediate area around Westover remains sparsely developed. The nominated property, approximately rectangular in shape, includes the historic house site and its landscaped yard on high ground to the northwest and sloping side and rear yards containing the historic outbuildings, sites of former outbuildings, and the slave cemetery.

The site of the historic plantation house is on the highest point of ground some 300 feet southeast of Meriwether Road, which runs along the low ridge at the northwest edge of the property. The historic house burned in 1954 and has been replaced, on the historic foundations, by a non-historic reproduction.

In front of the house are the formally landscaped grounds which date back to the first half of the 19th century, possibly to the 1820s when Westover plantation was established. The most intensively landscaped part of the front yard is a square-shaped plot between the house and the road. This geometric area is defined by perimeter plantings of boxwood and low brick planting-bed walls. Inscribed within the square so defined is an unpaved circular pathway lined with crepe myrtle, boxwood, cedar trees, and elm trees (one of these cedar trees has been core-dated to the 1820s). Both the square garden and the circular path are bisected by a straight path running from the door of the house to the edge of the road. This path, also unpaved, is bordered by boxwood and low brick planting-bed walls or curbs. The semi-circular areas to either side of the front walk are informally landscaped with clusters of shrubbery and trees in a level expanse of lawn; these trees include magnolias, one of which has been core-dated to the 1820s. Close to the front of the house are the remains of formal boxwood gardens laid out in rectangular and circular patterns. Portions of these gardens were damaged when the house burned in 1954. Along the road at the front edge of the garden are the standing remains of an antebellum picket fence. The fence consists of paneled posts on stone foundations supporting a three-rail array of alternately tall and short pickets.

To either side of the formally laid out, square-shaped front garden are more informally landscaped grounds. These grounds feature an informal arrangement of geometrically shaped planting beds on level or gently sloping expanses of lawn. The planting beds take on a variety of geometric forms - linear, zig-zag, square, rectangular, and diamond - defined primarily by boxwood hedges and low brick walls or curbs. The planting beds contain a variety of ornamental shrubs including box, crepe myrtle, tea olive, cherry laurel, and varnish trees along with larger cedar, Japanese pine, magnolia, and elm

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trees. One varnish tree has been core-dated to the late 19th century; a Japanese pine has been similarly dated to the mid-19th century. To the southwest, these informally landscaped grounds blend into the adjacent property. To the northeast, they terminate abruptly at a steep, wooded slope. Contained in the informally landscaped grounds to the southwest is a small, square, one-story, hipped-roofed brick building. This building served as the plantation office during both the antebellum and postbellum periods. It contains a fine early 19th-century fireplace mantel and the historic plantation safe. The 20th-century dirt driveway for the property cuts diagonally across the side yard near the office building.

The side yards northeast and southwest of the house are even more informally landscaped. Expanses of level or gently sloping lawn are dotted with mature hardwood trees and occasional shrubbery. At either end of the house, close by the structure, are sub-terranean masonry cisterns. Historically, roof water was channeled into these cisterns through gutters and downspouts. The cisterns currently are capped at ground level by masonry and wood covers.

The front and side gardens at Westover contain, for the most part, documented historic plant materials. The overall planting pattern, the major plant materials including trees, many of the ornamental shrubs, and much of the boxwood dates to the 19th century. Specimens of cedar and magnolia trees have been core-dated to the 1820s. A Japanese pine has been core-dated to the mid-19th century and a varnish tree has been similarly dated to the late 19th century. Some ornamental shrubs including crepe myrtles and portions of the boxwood hedges were replaced in the early 20th century.

Behind the house, to the southeast, is the rear yard. For some 250 feet the back yard slopes gradually away from the house; then the ground slopes more steeply into a creek and non-historic pond at the eastern corner of the property. The back yard is, for the most part, open, studded with historic and non-historic trees. The steeper slopes are more heavily wooded and feature early 20th-century erosion gullies. The rear yard contains a group of historic antebellum outbuildings, the known sites of former historic outbuildings, and several non-historic outbuildings, all arranged in an overall rectilinear pattern. Directly behind the house is a modern, traditionally styled garage/apartment structure. Beyond it are the two remaining flanking ends of a long, narrow detached kitchen. The central portion of the building was destroyed, although evidence of stone and brick foundations remains; the surviving end portions of the building (known now as the "garden house" and the "play house") have been largely reconstructed using the original framing and historic materials where possible. To the northeast of the kitchen are an antebellum commissary, a non-historic brick well house, the site of the historic wash house, and the antebellum smoke house. Further northeast, at the edge of the cleared yard, is a reconstructed privy. To the southwest of the kitchen are the sites of the historic carriage house and harness shed. To the rear of the back yard, at the edge of the cleared, relatively level area, are the remains of two former slave cabins and, to the south, two extant antebellum slave houses.

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With the exception of the brick plantation office in the front yard, all the extant historic outbuildings are rectangular in plan, one story high, and gable roofed, with weatherboard siding over heavy timber frames. The framing system of at least several of these outbuildings (those whose framing could be observed) features unusual corner posts, L-shaped in cross-section, hewn by hand from single massive timbers. Subsidiary framing components are mortised and tenoned together in traditional fashion. The two extant slave houses also feature signs of late 19th-century or early 20th century remodeling; these signs include plastered interior walls and ceilings and beaded tongue-and-groove paneling. The sites of former historic outbuildings are marked by stone and brick chimney falls, the remains of brick foundation piers, and mounds of earth.

Approximately 300 feet east-southeast of the collection of outbuildings in the rear yard is the slave cemetery. The cemetery is located in a wooded area at the upper edge of the steeply eroded slope. The location and identity of this cemetery are known primarily through family tradition, although corroborating evidence in the form of roughly hewn or natural stones, often used as slave grave markers, and depressions on the surface of the ground which may indicate graves, is present. The extent of the cemetery is unknown.

Downhill and to the east of the cemetery is the spring house. Located at the bottom of a ravine, it marks the spring from which the plantation house drew its water. The spring house itself is a small, possibly antebellum brick structure. Repairs, including a new roof, have been made to the structure from time to time.

The nominated property consists of the 40 acres currently owned by the property owner. It contains the historic house site, the landscaped yard, outbuildings, sites of former outbuildings, and the cemetery, as well as a representative portion of the historic plantation acreage. It also provides a convenient management unit for the historic resources associated with the property. To the northwest is Meriwether Road, a paved county highway; beyond are fields and woods. To the northeast and southeast is forest. To the southwest is a small residential property, railroad tracks, and a state highway.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates ca. 1822 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The plantation at Westover was established about 1822 by Benjamin S. Jordan (1793-1856), a wealthy and influential land owner and planter in central Georgia. Jordan constructed the plantation buildings which survive today. He also is believed to have had the formal gardens laid out around his plantation home at this time. Upon his death in 1856, Jordan's property was inherited by his son, Leonidas A. Jordan (1823-1899), who in addition to being a land owner and planter was also a successful businessman and founder of the Middle Georgia railroad. Leonidas Jordan maintained Westover as his father had developed it, letting the early 19th-century landscaping grow into maturity and retaining many of the antebellum buildings. After his death, in the 20th century, the property passed out of the Jordan family. Buildings began to deteriorate, the grounds were poorly maintained, and plantings grew wild. In 1930 Dr. L. C. Lindsley, chemistry professor at Georgia State College for Women (now Georgia College) in nearby Milledgeville, purchased the property and began restoring the grounds and preserving the buildings. In March of 1934 the property was recorded by the Historic American Buildings Survey; P. Thornton Marye, HABS district officer, prepared a plan of the landscaped grounds. That year the property also was featured in Alice Lockwood's Gardens of Colony and State. Hollywood photographers visited the gardens in preparation for making the movie sets for "Gone With the Wind." In 1954 the main house was struck by lightning and destroyed; the fire damaged a small portion of the landscaped grounds as well. A new house, modeled after the old, was built upon the historic foundations. The property is now owned by Thulia Lindsley Bramlett; family members are preserving the landscaped grounds and historic outbuildings.

Westover is significant in landscape architecture because of its formal antebellum landscaped front grounds. Westover is one of only half a dozen extant documented examples of formal antebellum landscaping in Georgia. Its strict geometric layout, sharply defined planting beds, rectilinear and circular paths, brick planting-bed walls or curbs, stylish picket fencing, and regularly spaced plantings all reflect landscape design principles derived from Renaissance traditions that prevailed in this country during the 18th and early 19th centuries. The extensive use of boxwood - a shrub that can be clipped into precise geometric forms - is also characteristic of this style, or mode, of landscape gardening, in Georgia and elsewhere. The range of historic plant materials - including boxwood, crepe myrtle, tea olive, cherry laurel, varnish trees, Japanese pine, magnolia, cedar, and elm- is unusually broad for such an ancient Georgia garden. Even more important is the fact that these historic plants remain in situ, related to each by the original garden design. Indeed, the scale and integrity of the formally landscaped grounds at Westover make them exceptional in the state. That they survived the mid- to late 19th

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 40.4 acres

Quadrangle name Lake Sinclair West, GA

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A	<u>17</u>	<u>285780</u>	<u>3668250</u>
Zone	Easting	Northing	

B	<u>17</u>	<u>286140</u>	<u>3667860</u>
Zone	Easting	Northing	

C	<u>17</u>	<u>285840</u>	<u>3667600</u>
Zone	Easting	Northing	

D	<u>17</u>	<u>285580</u>	<u>3667940</u>
Zone	Easting	Northing	

E			
Zone	Easting	Northing	

F			
Zone	Easting	Northing	

G			
Zone	Easting	Northing	

H			
Zone	Easting	Northing	

Verbal boundary description and justification Nominated property coincides with current legal description of property. Boundaries of nominated property are drawn to scale on attached plat map. See Section 7 for discussion of boundaries.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Richard Cloues, National Register Coordinator

organization Ga. Dept. of Natural Resources date December 15, 1986

street & number 205 Butler St. S. E. Suite 1462 telephone 404-656-2840

city or town Atlanta state GA 30334

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Elizabeth A. Lyon
 title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date 1/7/87

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Sharon Byrum 2-12-87
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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century popularity of informal, picturesque landscape gardening (translated from the English and popularized in America by Andrew Jackson Downing) is equally as remarkable.

Westover is significant in architecture for its historic antebellum plantation outbuildings. Virtually every major antebellum plantation in Georgia had numerous outbuildings; very few of these auxiliary structures survive, however. Westover features a range of surviving antebellum outbuildings including a commissary, a smokehouse, portions of a detached kitchen, and two slave houses. These buildings represent prevailing design principles and construction materials and techniques for these types of structures. A virtually unique architectural feature of these buildings is the L-shaped, hand-hewn corner post used in their heavy timber framing; most buildings of this era used square-sectioned corner posts. These surviving outbuildings, along with the known sites of other outbuildings, also illustrate the characteristic development pattern of the nucleated antebellum plantation which rarely survived post-Civil War decentralization.

Westover is significant in historic archaeology for its potential to yield information about antebellum plantation life, development, and landscaping. Although no formal archaeology has been conducted at Westover, the known locations of several otherwise undocumented historic outbuildings and associated activity centers (e.g. the carriage house and harness shop), the assumed presence of other traditional plantation outbuilding sites and activity centers (e.g. a blacksmith's shop and/or carpentry shed), the implied presence of additional historic landscape features (e.g. the "garden house," buried planting beds, obscured paths, possibly even historic plant remains), the cisterns with their undocumented, submerged contents, and the presence of the undocumented slave cemetery all suggest a high probability that formal archaeology could yield information that would contribute to our currently imperfect understanding of plantation life, slave life, and the arrangement and development of an antebellum Piedmont plantation complex including its landscaping.

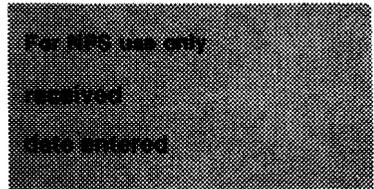
Applicable National Register Criteria - C, D

Westover meets National Register Criteria C because of its historic significance in the areas of landscape architecture and architecture. The formal gardens at Westover represent a distinctive period approach to landscaping that is characteristic of the early 19th century in Georgia. Such gardens are, and were, relatively rare in this state. Their scale and integrity add to their importance. The outbuildings at Westover represent similarly rare and characteristic middle Georgia auxiliary plantation structures dating from the first half of the 19th century. Few structures of these types and age survive. Several of the outbuildings feature a virtually unique construction detail - the L-shaped corner posts - that adds to their architectural importance. Westover meets National Register Criteria D because of its potential to yield information through

(Continued)

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archaeological investigation that would contribute to our currently imperfect understanding of antebellum plantation life and development in general and of domestic slave life and plantation landscaping in particular.

Contributing/Non-Contributing Resources

Contributing buildings: 6 (plantation office, commissary, smoke house, detached kitchen (2 sections), two slave houses).

Non-contributing buildings: 3 (main house, privy, garage/apartment).

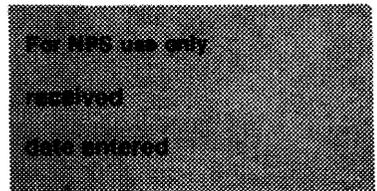
Contributing structures: 6 (formal landscaped gardens, picket fence, two cisterns, slave cemetery, spring house).

Non-contributing structures: 1 (well house).

Contributing sites: 2 (collective sites of 5 formerhistoric outbuildings, slave cemetery).

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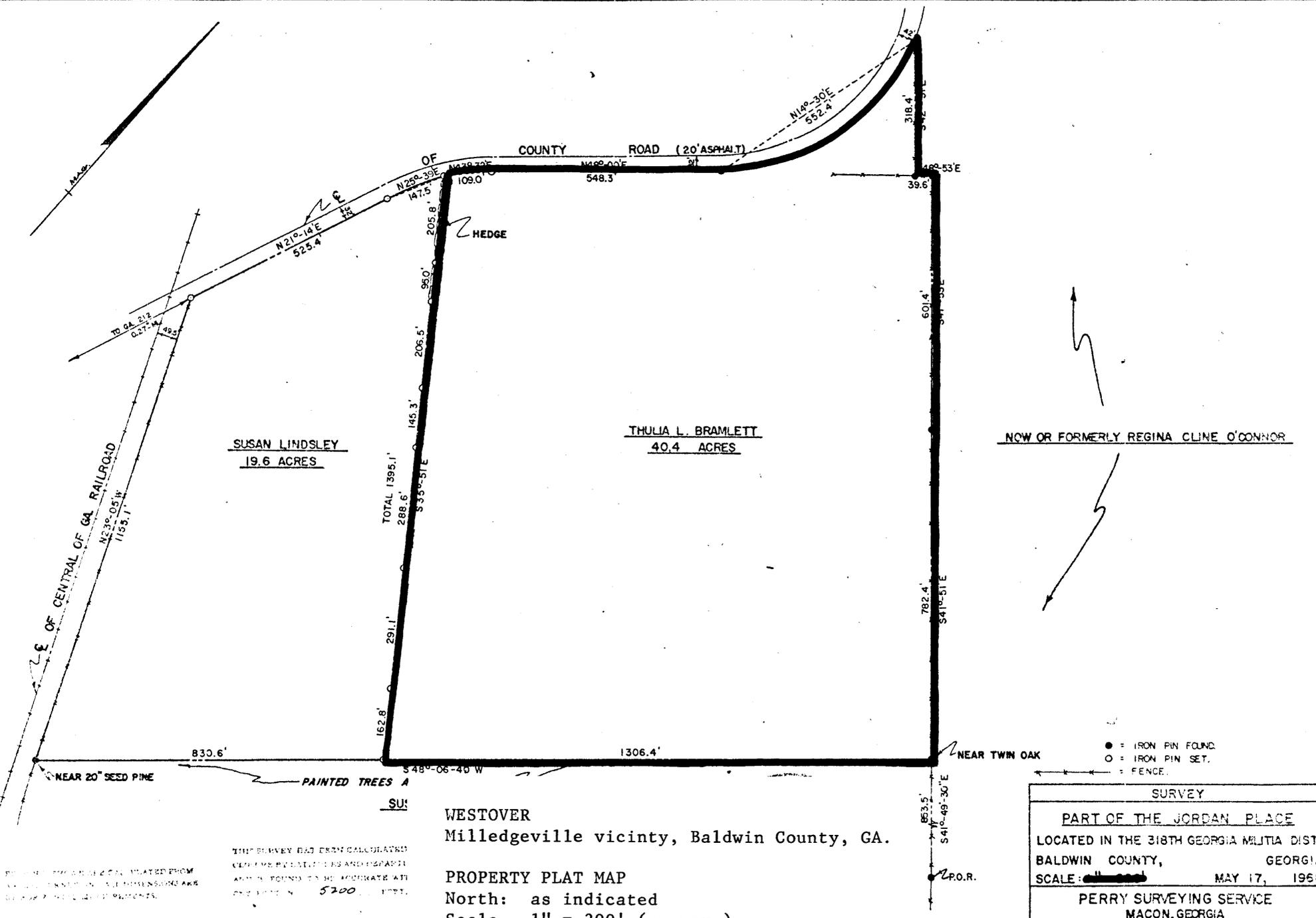
Continuation sheet

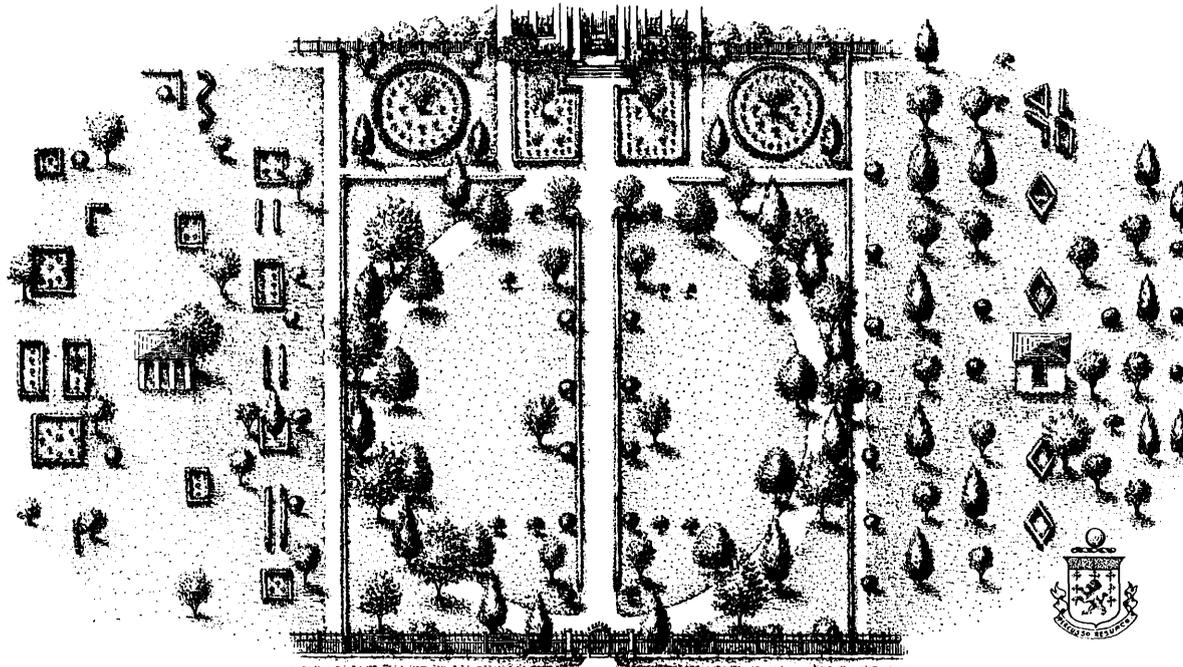
Bibliographical

Item number 9

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P. Thornton Mayre

1822-1863

The Interesting Grounds and Gardens at Westover, Built by Colonel Ben Jordan

WESTOVER
Milledgeville vicinity, Baldwin County, GA.

LANDSCAPING PLAN (HISTORIC)

North: ↙
Scale: As indicated.
Drawn by: P. Thornton Mayre, 1932
Source: Loraine M. Cooney, Garden History of Georgia. (1933), p. 83.

