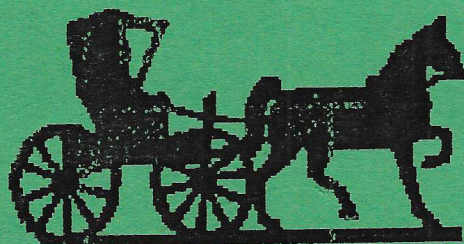


A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CURRY FAMILY
OF EDGEFIELD DISTRICT, SOUTH CAROLINA



CURRYTOWNE
Stations

SOUTHEASTERN ARCHEOLOGICAL SERVICES, INC.

Athens, Georgia

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CURRY FAMILY
OF EDGEFIELD DISTRICT, SOUTH CAROLINA

by
Thomas H. Gresham

Prepared for
Currytowne Associates, Inc.
c/o Mel Story
Security Federal Savings Bank
313 East Martintowne Road
North Augusta, South Carolina

SOUTHEASTERN ARCHEOLOGICAL SERVICES, INC.
P.O. Drawer 8086
Athens, Georgia 30606

6 January 1988

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction.....	1
Overview.....	2
The Early Years.....	5
The People.....	7
The Land.....	14
The Curry-Roper Cemetery.....	26
Curryton Academy.....	31
References.....	35
Appendix A: Curry Family Genealogical Chart.....	36
Appendix B: Deed Summary of Curry Land Transactions.....	37

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. A Portion of Boles's (1871) Map of Edgefield County.....	4
2. Plat Map of Susannah Lanear Tract (1809).....	16
3. Susannah Lanear Tract on Twentieth Century Map.....	17
4. Lewis Curry Plat (1829).....	19
5. Lewis Curry Tract on Twentieth Century Map.....	20
6. Joel Curry Plat (1863).....	23
7. Joel Curry Tract on Twentieth Century Map.....	25
8. Sketch Map of Cemetery at Currytowne Station.....	27

Introduction

This report briefly summarizes the history of the Curry family and their land holdings in extreme southern Edgefield County, South Carolina. This is a companion study to an archeological report on the Curry Cemetery (Gresham 1986), which is located in the Currytowne Station development, 6 miles north of North Augusta. The developers, Currytowne Associates, commissioned both reports in an effort to preserve and enhance the historic aspects of their development tract, particularly in regard to the cemetery. Mr. C. Mel Story, regional vice-president of Security Federal Savings Bank and principal of Currytowne Associates, presented the goals of this second study as follows:

- 1) to research the history of the land and family associated with the Curry Cemetery
- 2) to synthesize this history into a narrative that will provide:
 - a. an historic context for the modern development,
 - b. information for a brochure relating this history to Currytowne Station, and
 - c. information for an historic marker for the cemetery.

Thomas Gresham, Southeastern Archeological Services, Inc., briefly (3 days) conducted archival research in Edgefield, South Carolina, the seat of Edgefield County. This research focused on deeds and land transactions of the Curry family, who once owned the Currytowne Station property. This lands-oriented research complemented the genealogical research conducted by family descendants, principally Mrs. Elizabeth R. Hill and Mr. Claude M. Hill. Mrs. Archie Story and Mrs. Thomas Curry also provided information used in this report.

The principal sources consulted were:

- 1) Curry and Roper family files compiled and maintained by Elizabeth R. Hill--mostly genealogical, based on census records, court records, and a few family records;
- 2) Curry and Roper family files compiled by Claude Hill;
- 3) title search conducted by attorney Robert Johnson for Currytowne Associates;
- 4) Curry and Roper files, maps, and various resources (including Federal Census Schedules) housed at Edgefield County Archives (Courtesy Center);
- 5) Deed records, plats and wills housed at the Probate Judge's Office and Clerk of Court's office, Edgefield; and
- 6) Conversations with Nancy Mims, curator of Edgefield County Archives, Curry family descendants and historical researchers Elizabeth Hill and Claude Hill.

The information gathered and presented here is essentially genealogical or related to land transactions. Personal or anecdotal information was not available through these sources.

Overview

The English settled South Carolina in the early 1600s, with development in the "upcountry" beginning in the latter part of the century. The earliest settlers were traders in Indian country. The English government began granting land in the upcountry in the 1700s. After the Revolutionary War, the American government continued to grant vacant land, and privately-traded tracts began to be recorded in American courts. The project area (present-day Edgefield County) was in Ninety-Six District after the Revolutionary War. This large district (all of western South Carolina) was divided in 1785 and Edgefield District was formed.

Edgefield District was divided into counties in the mid-1800s and included Edgefield County.

Since land transactions are a major focus of this report, some geographical orientation will be useful. Most older land deeds do not have plat maps and tracts of land are denoted by contemporary landmarks. A portion of the 1871 Isaac Boles map of Edgefield County provides a good nineteenth century view of the area (Figure 1). Key roads and other landmarks mentioned in the text are added or accentuated. The roads labeled are also shown on Thomas Anderson's (1817) map of Edgefield District. Road names change frequently in the deeds. The name "Stage Road" was used in the early nineteenth century, but the lower section became known as Plank Road. Carters Road was merely referred to as the road from Martintown Road to the Plank Road (or Stage Road). Carters Road was also called the Plank Road and is known today as Curryton Road. Plank Road was a generic term that could refer to several roads. Cherokee Ponds, a placename, is just east of Sweetwater Church.

The Curry family owned land in at least three areas. These are shown on Figure 1 as:

- 1) an imprecisely defined area between Shaws Creek and the South Edisto River and on the west side of Shaws Creek;
- 2) an area east of the Plank Road; and
- 3) Sweetwater Creek area.

The Currytowne Station development tract is in the western section of the Currys' Sweetwater Creek land holdings where "Curryton" is shown on the map (Figure 1).

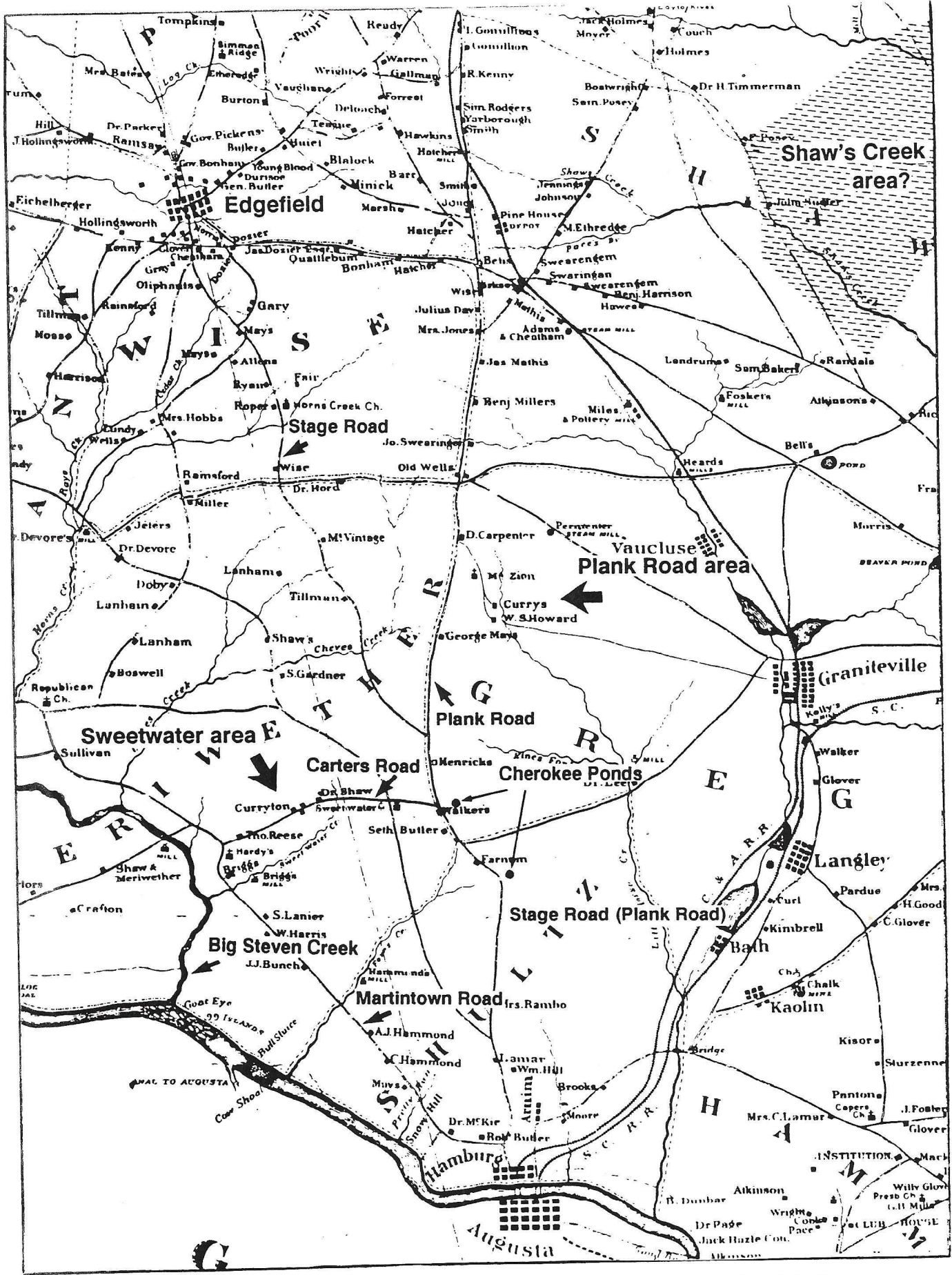


Figure 1. A Portion of Boles's (1871) Map of Edgefield County.

Early twentieth century USGS maps (1919 and 1923) accurately depict old roads and modern topography, and are used to relate old plats to modern landforms.

The Early Years

Very little is known of the origins of the Curry family in Edgefield District. The name John Curry (also spelled Currey and Currie) occurs in various late eighteenth century legal documents, but it is not clear if this refers to the John Curry buried in Curry Cemetery. The South Carolina Department of Archives and History's (S.C.D.A.H.) index of the Curry name (various spellings) contains 20 pages of references to the name in colonial period documents. However, none of the entries for John Curry appear to pertain to the John Curry of Edgefield District, which was part of Ninety-Six District or Granville County in colonial times. Most colonial land grants to Currys were in Craven or Berkley Counties. However, several grants were made to a William Currie in Ninety-Six District in the 1770s. It is not known whether William was related to John Curry (whose name is often spelled Currie), but William is a name that later occurs in the Edgefield Curry family. The S.C.D.A.H. index does not list any land grants to a John Curry in Ninety-Six District. There is, however, indirect evidence in early nineteenth century deeds of John Curry having received land grants before 1787.

An 1829 deed (Deed Book 44, p. 330) refers to "part of two old grants to John Curry" on Shaws Creek which total 1338 ac. John Curry's tract on Shaws Creek (See Figure 1) is also mentioned in an 1803 deed (Deed Book 24, p. 25). We know that

John Currie sold 504 ac on Shaws Creek in 1795 (Deed Book 13, p. 303), so it seems reasonable that he had obtained sizable land holdings in the Shaws Creek area. Also, some evidence indicates that John Curry owned land closer to the Currytowne Station project area. A deed transferring 148 ac from John Pierce, Sr., to William Pierce (Deed Book 5, pp. 163-166) refers to the land as part of a tract granted to John Curry in 1785. A wagon road from Augusta to Ninety-Six passed through this property. This road may be the Stage Road shown on Anderson's 1817 map of Edgefield District, in which case the property may be the tract that remained in the family until 1914. A Curry residence is shown on Boles's 1871 map of Edgefield County just east of a major road that leads to Augusta. Two other deeds, dealing with Sieglers and Hardys in 1790 and 1792, mention lands adjoining John Curry's property (Deed Book 5, pp. 7-12; Deed Book 8, pp. 5-10). Since "Siegler" and "Hardy" are names that occur on maps and plats very close to the Currytowne Station property, it is likely that John Curry also owned land in this vicinity (Sweetwater area in Figure 1) by 1790.

John Curry, then, owned a relatively large piece of land on Shaws Creek (about 15 miles east of the project area) prior to 1795 and probably owned two other tracts close to the project area by 1785 and 1790. As a Revolutionary War veteran, he may have been given land grants. Two John Currys from South Carolina are listed in a Revolutionary War roster (Moss 1983). A Daughters of the American Revolution application (completed by Mrs. Mary Curry Ward in 1973) cites Salley's Stub Entries of South Carolina, Vol. 4, p. 527 as proof of John Curry's participation in

the war. However, this is not proof that this is the same John Curry with which we are concerned.

Prior to the formation of Edgefield District in 1785, John Curry's name appears in several official documents of Ninety-Six District. Most significantly, a John Curry is listed in the 1778-1779 Jury Lists of South Carolina (Hendrix and Lindsay 1980) for the area "between Turkey Creek and Savannah River." Turkey Creek is a tributary of Stevens (or Big Stevens) Creek and the area between it and the river centers on the Currytowne Station project area. Since jury members are selected from residents of an area, this suggests that John Curry was living near the project area as early as 1778. That John "Currie" assisted in inventorying an estate near Cherokee Ponds (3 miles from the project area) in 1783 supports this (Young n.d.). Whether he lived on the tract adjacent to the Plank Road or the Sweetwater tract is not clear, but the latter is suggested in subsequent deeds.

Finally, a Christian Curry (female) is in the area at this time, but her relationship to John Curry, if any, is unknown. She bought 100 ac on a branch of Dry Creek (about 25 miles from the project area) in 1787 (Deed Book 3, pp. 325-331), then left it to her grandchildren, sons of Thomas Easter, in 1798 (Deed Book 15, p. 311). She appears to be totally unrelated to the Currys of Curryton, since the Easter name does not ever occur and since the properties are relatively far removed from one another.

The People

Three generations descending from John and Kesiah Curry are depicted in Appendix A. Most of the names and dates are derived from primary sources, such as census schedules, wills, deeds, and tombstones. Carlee McClendon's compilations of newspaper notices of marriages (McClendon 1970) and deaths (McClendon 1977) supplied some names and dates. Likewise, Mrs. Elizabeth R. Hill's compilations of Curry genealogy was helpful (Hill 1986). The chart is biased to the Curry name and female descendants of John and Kesiah have not been adequately traced. Even so, it does appear that son-in-laws David Dobey and Luke Devore did not interact significantly (in land and business) with the Currys.

John and Kesiah had six children who survived into adulthood, three boys and three girls. As shown on the chart, Susanna (spelled many different ways), Lewis, and John figure most prominently in the family history. Matilda (Patsy) and Catherine (Katy) married and probably moved away. Both Devores and Dobeys (their husbands' surnames, respectively) are shown living on Horns Creek in 1871, about 7 miles from the Sweetwater property. The third son, Cader Curry, was born in 1791 (Hill 1986) and is listed in an 1817 deed as one of John Curry's unmarried children (Deed Book 35, p. 75). However, a Cader Curry is a witness to John "Currie" selling land to John Hardy in 1795, when the son would have been 4 years old. Both dates appear correct, so John Curry may have had a relative (brother) whose name was used for John and Kesiah's third son. The elder Cader is rarely referred to in the records. A Cada Curry is shown on an 1809 plat (Deed Book 29, p. 380) as owning land adjacent to John Curry's. Since

the younger Cader would have been 17 or 18 years old at the time, this may refer to the elder Cader. Cader is not mentioned after 1817 and he may have died soon after, probably without marrying.

The family descent from John Curry's namesake and second son, John, also is not entirely clear. Middle initials are rarely used with the John Currys and apparently father and son were rarely referred to as Senior and Junior. For clarity, John and Kesiah's son will be referred to as John Jr. John Jr. was married to Harriet as is shown on the tombstone of their son John W.W. This grave, which is in the Curry Cemetery at Currytowne Station, states that at his death in 1839 John W.W. was the only son of John Jr. and Harriet. In an 1842 deed (Deed Book EEE, p. 18) John Jr. gives some slaves to his daughter, Lucinda Mays. Harriet died in 1845 (McClendon 1977) and "left a husband and one daughter", presumably John Jr. and Lucinda. Harriet is buried in the Curry Cemetery. After Harriet's death, John Jr. married Maranda (probably in 1846 or 1847) and had another son who they named John R.A. Both John R.A. and Maranda are listed in the 1850 Federal Census Schedules and in a deed of gift from John Jr. just before his death (Deed Book 000, p. 510). John Jr., Maranda, and John R.A. were living on the Curry property at the Plank Road, just south of Mt. Zion Church (Deed Book 000, p. 510).

John and Kesiah's eldest two children, Susanna and Lewis, their spouses, and children figured most prominently in the Curry family of Edgefield District. Susanna was involved in an unusual series of marriages. In brief, she married Darling Lanear (various spellings) who, though he died young (age 33) fathered six

children. Susanna later married Benejah (various spellings) Curry, who some Curry descendants believe was her first cousin. They had two sons. She died in 1840. Benejah then married Emily. Benejah died in 1858 and Emily married Welcome Martin. Thus, this one marriage involved five spouses and concluded with two people related to the Currys only by marriage. The sons of Benejah and Susanna, John F. and James B. Curry, brought suit against Emily and Welcome Martin in 1860 in regard to the management of the estate (Hill 1986), land that, by virtue of the series of marriages, had ended up in the hands of unrelated people.

Mrs. Nancy Mims, curator of the Edgefield County Archives, related that there was a coroner's inquest into the death of Darling Lanear. He was suspected of having been poisoned, but the coroner was unable to prove this. The coroner's reports in the probate judge's office are mostly unindexed and we were unable to locate this report. Silas and Lewis Lanear are mentioned in several deeds until 1830, usually as witnesses. Silas apparently owned land in Edgefield County (cf. Deed Book 46, p. 44). An S. "Lanier" is shown on the 1871 Boles map as living on Martintown Road one mile south of Sweetwater Creek. Susanna, who died in 1840, is the only member of her branch of the family to be buried in the Curry Cemetery (see Appendix A).

Lewis Curry, John and Kesiah's oldest son, accumulated sizable land holdings, including much of the Currytowne Station property. Lewis and his son Joel were major land holders in the Sweetwater Creek area. Lewis owned the property on which the Curry Cemetery was located, and half of the marked graves are members of his family. He, however, has no tombstone there. Lewis

and Sarah had two sons, William and Joel, and a daughter, Susan. Lewis Curry notes in his 1860 will his grandson, John Marshall Curry (apparently William's only son), as living in Alabama. This could indicate that William had moved to Alabama. Also, William Curry does not appear in any of the land deeds of the Curryton area, whereas Joel and Susan do.

Joel Curry, Lewis and Sarah's second child, was the wealthiest Curry and accumulated the largest land holdings. He inherited Lewis's land and a tract through his wife, Elizabeth Thomas, and then bought a great deal more land. Both Lewis's and Joel's land holdings and residences centered on the Sweetwater Creek/Curryton area, although Joel did own outlying parcels. Joel and Elizabeth had eight children (see Appendix A), many of whom married and remained in the Curryton area. Joel and Elizabeth sold virtually all of their land in the early 1860s and left the area. Since Joel had accumulated most of the Curry property, this liquidated the bulk of the Curry land holdings in the area. The Curry name was perpetuated, however, by Curryton Academy and the small community of Curryton that developed around it. The Curryton Academy was located on 100 ac of land donated by Joel Curry. It was founded in 1853 and was destroyed by fire in 1892.

Lewis and Sarah's third child, Susan, married Joel Roper, Jr., and had eight children (see Appendix A). Joel inherited land from his father, Joel Roper Sr., and lived in the Curryton area. Joel and two daughters who died young, Sarah and Amy, are buried in the Curry Cemetery.

The Curry family, as outlined here, were relatively wealthy, but were generally typical nineteenth century farmer/planters of the lower Piedmont. We have very few records of their affairs at this time. However, several sources of personal information such as tax digests, equity bonds, family bibles and records, and newspaper articles, have not been thoroughly researched. Generally unindexed, these records are time consuming to review.

The Currys were farmers, as were most rural land holders of the nineteenth century. The 1860 Federal Census lists John, Lewis, and Joel Curry as heads of households with farming as their occupation. While most of their neighbors were farmers, their land did adjoin a physician, Dr. Hugh A. Shaw, and a minister, Rev. Samuel P. Getzen. The 1860 Census Schedules list real and personal property values for families. Those for the Currys and some of their immediate neighbors, presented below, show that in 1860 Joel Curry was by far the wealthiest Curry. Of course, by this time, John Jr. and Lewis had probably already distributed some of their property to heirs.

Table 1. Summary of 1860 Census Schedules.

Head of Household	Age	Occupation	Value of Property	
			Real	Personal
John Curry Jr.	70	farmer	5,000	1,337
Lewis Curry	78	farmer	5,000	15,000
Joel Curry	50	farmer	25,000	60,000
Susan Roper	47	--	--	--
Robert Meriwether	45	farmer	42,000	47,000
Samuel P. Getzen	53	minister	10,000	20,000
Hugh A. Shaw	33	physician	9,500	15,500
Mrs. E. Lanham	50	--	14,800	40,000

Lewis Curry owned 17 slaves when he wrote his will in 1860, which probably accounts for most of the value of his personal property. Based on relative amounts of personal property and the fact that Joel Curry owned a great deal of land, Joel probably owned many slaves. Joel and Susan Roper owned \$14,950 of real estate and 45 slaves worth \$24,000 at his death in 1858 (Hill 1984).

Joel Curry, and to a lesser extent Lewis Curry, had some business interests outside of farming. One of these was a major share in the private (for profit) Hamburg to Edgefield Plank Road that passed by Curry land. Joel Curry and Julius Day placed an advertisement in the Edgefield newspaper during the Civil War stating:

ATTENTION ALL!!! THE SUBSCRIBERS HAVE BOUGHT THE HAMBURG AND EDGEFIELD PLANK ROAD. USERS FROM PINE HOUSE TO GRANITEVILLE WILL PAY TOLL AT JULIUS DAY'S AND THOSE BELOW THE TOLL GATE WILL MAKE ARRANGEMENT BY THE YEAR. WITH GENEROUS ASSISTANCE FROM THE PEOPLE, THEY WILL CONVINCED THE DEVIL THAT THE HAMBURG AND EDGEFIELD PLANK ROAD IS NO HUMBUG.

(SIGNED) JULIUS DAY : JOEL CURRY 11

Apparently this private road competed with an adjacent public road, as a 17 ac tract sold in 1860 is described as lying "between plank road and the public road from Hamburg to Edgefield" (Deed Book KKK, p. 262). The Plank Road Company existed as early as 1850 when Lewis Curry sold the company 1027.5 ac at Upper Cherokee Ponds, immediately on the Stage Road from Hamburg to Edgefield (Deed Book GGG, p. 40). In 1853 Joel Curry and George Bell purchased a warehouse, residence, and 8 ac plot in Hamburg (Deed Book HHH, p. 120).

The Land

A complete listing of recorded land transactions involving the Curry family from 1787 to 1914 is presented in Appendix B. In brief, this record of transactions shows that the Currys began buying and selling land in earnest around 1811 and continued to do so until Joel Curry sold most of the Curry land during the Civil War. The transactions in Appendix B are those that were indexed in the deed records and, while such indexing is generally thorough and reliable, some deeds could have been omitted in the indexes. Also, these are recorded deeds only. There are several references within deeds (e.g., Deed Book CCC, p. 94) to Curry land transactions that were not officially recorded. Some deeds were recorded many years after the transaction (e.g., Deed Book 18, p. 471 records in 1902 a sale from Joel Curry to Hugh A. Shaw that took place in 1850). Also, land transferred by inheritance was not necessarily recorded in the deed books. Finally, while Edgefield County's records are remarkably complete, the plat books covering the years 1836-1846 and 1875-1907 are missing. Therefore, a complete chain of title with specific geographical reference is impossible to construct. However, using the existing plats and the verbal descriptions in the recorded deeds, Curry lands in Edgefield County can be somewhat defined.

By 1800 it appears that John and Kesiah Curry owned three tracts of land, one on the west side of Shaws Creek, one on the Stage (or Plank) Road, and one at Sweetwater Creek (Figure 1). Most of these tracts were probably acquired in the 1770s and 1780s. John Curry sold off Shaws Creek holdings in three transactions dated 1796, 1803, and 1818. In all, he disposed of

1004 ac in these three sales to non-family members. During this time (1814) he purchased a 300 ac tract on Shaws Creek. The net decrease from his original 1338 ac grant was about 700 ac. In 1830 Benejah Curry sold 200 ac on Shaws Creek to John Curry, probably his brother-in-law, John Jr. His son, John Freeman, was only 13 years old at the time.

How Benejah acquired the land he sold is not known. Although about 438 ac in the Shaws Creek area are unaccounted for, it seems to be out of the Curry family, since no Curry deeds after 1830 mention the Shaws Creek property.

The Sweetwater Creek land was apparently the heart of the Curry land holdings. The amount, date, and configuration of John's original grant in this area is unknown. One of the earliest transactions in this area involves 29 ac sold by John to Nicolas Woods in 1807. Siegler and Hancock are listed as neighboring land owners. In 1809 John deeded 100 ac to his widowed daughter, Susanna Lanear. The accompanying plat (Deed Book 29, p. 380) shows a residence south of a creek, Cada Curry's land to the north, and John Curry's land to the west (Figure 2). The deed states that this is "part of that tract where John Curry lives" and the plat labels this as "house and plantation." Therefore, John may have given Susannah his and Kesiah's house and part of his farm. However, the phrasing could be interpreted to mean that John's house was west of the one shown on the plat. In either case, the John Curry home was probably just south of Hardys Branch. Figure 3 shows Susannah's tract approximated onto a 1919-1923 map. Either the structure shown within this tract or immediately west of it could have been John and Kesiah's home. As the

plat shows, John Curry owned the land west of Susannah's and Cada Curry owned the land to the north. Since John and Kesiah's son Cada would have been 17 years old when the plat was surveyed, this Cada Curry may be someone else, perhaps John's brother.

John Curry's land holdings were apparently divided among his six children at his death. A bond between the children and John prepared in 1817 (Deed Book 35, p. 75) is not specific but seems to provide for the equal division of his estate, which presumably included lands around Sweetwater Creek and the Plank Road. However, only Lewis, John Jr., Susannah, and Benejah are the principal holders of Curry land in the second generation. Lewis and John Jr. each bought tracts prior to John's death. John Jr. acquired 640 ac near the Plank Road in 1814 and Lewis acquired 124.5 ac, with premises, on Sweetwater Creek in 1811. Both Lewis and John Jr. owned tracts in both the Sweetwater and Plank Road areas.

An 1829 plat (Plat Book 1, p. 362) shows a 498 ac tract belonging to Lewis Curry (Figure 4). This is the only nineteenth century plat that includes the Currytowne Station property. Lewis owned land on both sides of Curryton Road (labeled as Carters Road on the plat) and lived in a large house in the northeast section of the property. The symbol adjacent to the road in front of the house may be a gate. Superimposing this plat on a 1919-1923 map (Figure 5), this house is the one that stands today just west of the Currytowne Station property. This tract also includes the Curry Cemetery.

The plat also shows neighboring landowners. In particular, Benejah Curry (and wife Susannah) owned land to the southeast and

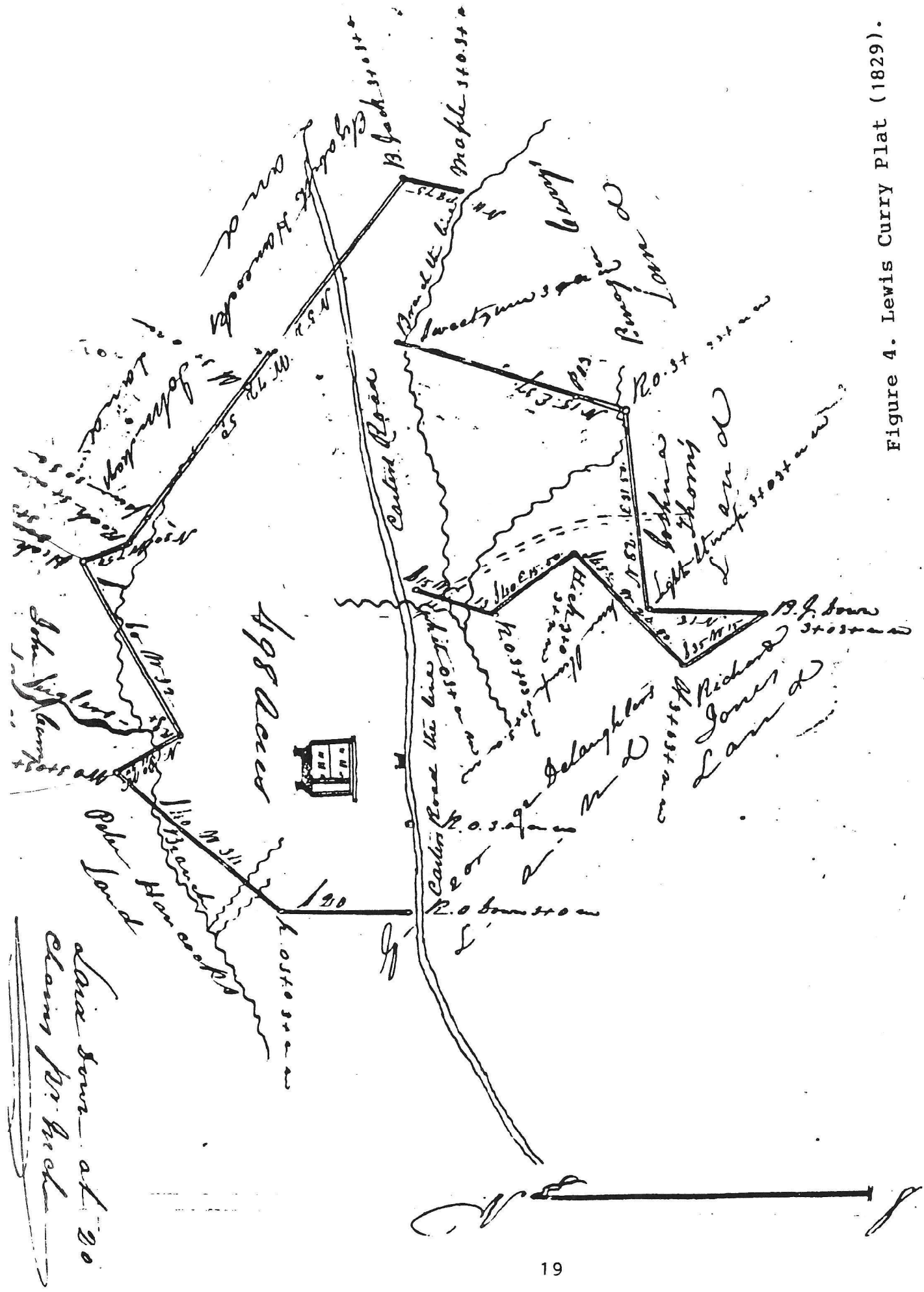


Figure 4. Lewis Curry Plat (1829).

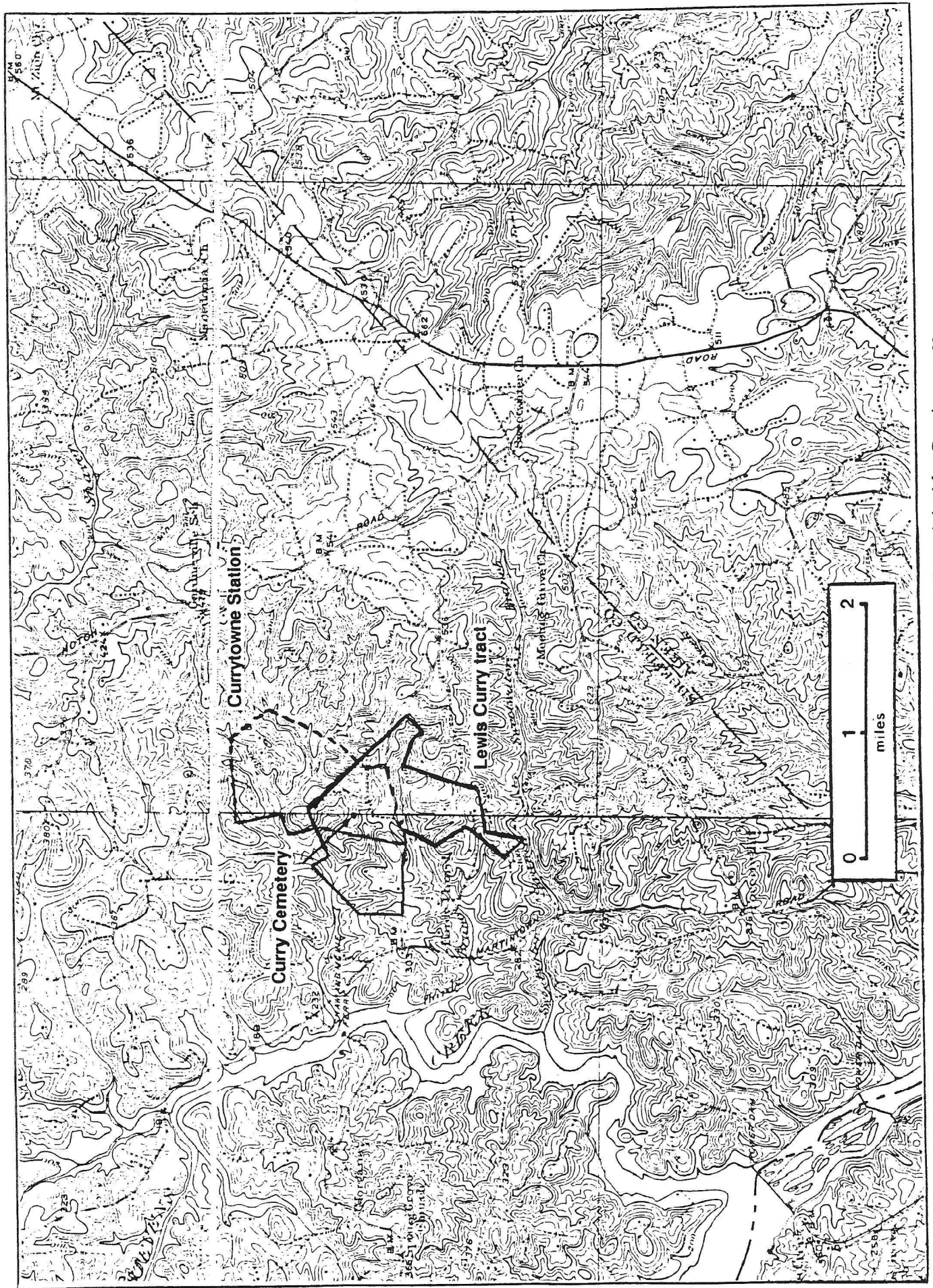


Figure 5. Lewis Curry Tract on Twentieth Century Map.

John Curry owned land to the north, on Sieglers Branch. John Mays owned the land to the northeast, which would include the remainder of the Currytowne Station property.

Lewis and John Jr. bought and sold a great deal of land in the 1820s and 1830s. Lewis bought six tracts totaling about 1100 ac and sold only two tracts totaling 126 ac during this time. Most of this land was in the Sweetwater Creek area, adjoining lands he already owned. For instance, in 1830 he bought the 180 ac George Delaughter tract shown on the 1829 plat (Figure 4). John Jr. bought five tracts totaling 950 ac and sold three tracts totaling 590 ac. Apparently both Lewis and John Jr. were living in the Sweetwater Creek area at this time. In 1833 John Jr. sold a 305 ac tract that was described as the plantation where John Curry resided, immediately north of Lewis Curry's property (Deed Book 46, p. 320). However, in John Jr.'s deed of gift to his wife and son in 1868, his "mansion" is on the Plank Road property. Therefore, he probably moved his place of residence from the Sweetwater Creek property to the Plank Road property some time after 1833. The use of the term "mansion" for his second residence suggests a larger, grander house and may reflect greater prosperity.

Lewis's son, Joel Curry, began accumulating land prior to 1835, when he and his wife (Elizabeth Thomas Curry) sold 542 ac on Horns Creek that she had inherited. Joel bought tracts totaling 1514 ac in four transactions from 1842 to 1855. However, between 1860 and 1863 he sold 2625 ac in three transactions, indicating more purchases. At various times he apparently owned over 3000 ac stretching from the west side of Stevens Creek to

Sweetwater Church, about 5 miles. He sold 103 ac in 1850 and gave 100 ac to Curryton Academy in 1853. Although he bought the 504 ac Simon Hancock tract from his father in 1842 and 1855, he may have received other land as gifts from Lewis. Joel apparently never owned the Lewis Curry home place (Figure 4) or the Curry Cemetery. Although Lewis willed much of his land (excluding the home and cemetery tract) to Joel (Will Book E, p. 488), Joel was selling his land in the years just before his father's death in 1863.

Joel Curry sold 1277 ac on the west side of Stevens Creek to Thomas Reese in 1860. Deeds showing how he acquired this land are not recorded. Joel sold his residence and main plantation (1348 ac) in 1863 to Daniel Hayward, thus ending the reign of Currys as major land holders in the Sweetwater Creek area. The Lewis Curry homeplace and the Curry Cemetery apparently passed into the Hancock family some time after the Civil War. An 1880 deed (Deed Book 5, p. 361) records the selling of the Lewis Curry tract from Delitha Hancock to Samuel Mays.

The plat and deed for Joel's sale of his 1348 ac plantation is revealing in several respects. The 1863 plat (Figure 6) shows a large structure in the location of the still standing Joel Curry home (now owned by the Mealings). The structure on the plat is presumed to represent Joel's house, as is the case with the plat of Lewis Curry's homeplace. The plat shows Mrs. Curry owning land to the west. This must be Mary Curry, widow of Lewis Curry who had died in 1863. Mrs. Susan Roper, Joel's sister and also a widow, owned land to the east adjacent to lands owned by Joel. Silas Lanear, Joel Curry's cousin, owned land to the south. The

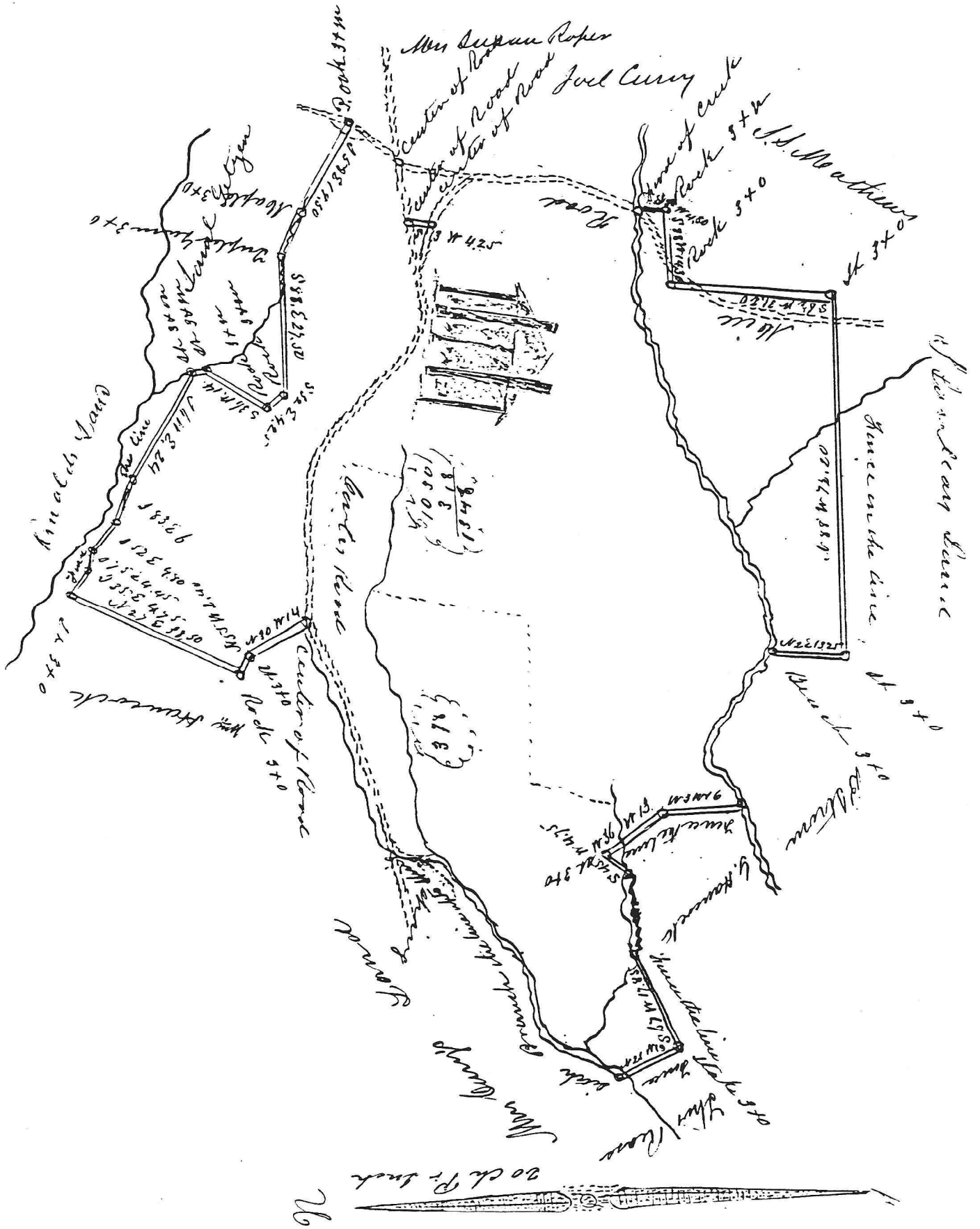


Figure 6. Joel Curry Plat (1863).

Curryton Academy property is not shown. This consisted of 100 ac on the south side of Carters Road. If this plat is accurate and complete, then the academy must have been further to the east or west of this tract. Figure 7 superimposes the Joel Curry tract onto 1919-1923 maps and shows the relationship of this tract to the modern landscape. This figure also shows a possible location of the Curryton Academy.

The deeds for transferring the 1348 ac plantation reflect the tumult of the Civil War. Joel does not sell the land himself. Rather, on October 5, 1863, he assigned power of attorney for the sale to Robert Meriwether (Deed Book LLL, p. 274). On November 6, 1863, Elizabeth Curry agreed to the sale (following standard procedure) and apparently appeared at the courthouse by herself (Deed Book LLL, p. 275). Robert Meriwether recorded the sale on January 18, 1864. The sequence of events and the need for transferring power of attorney suggests that Joel decided to hurriedly evacuate the area, perhaps a month or so in advance of his wife. Family descendants believe he moved to Baker County, Georgia. Joel sold this 1348 ac tract at somewhat inflated prices. The \$26,960 price (\$20 an acre versus \$6.52 an acre in a sale 13 years earlier) probably reflects the inflation associated with decreasing confidence in Confederate currency. Joel sold several thousand acres of land during the war for Confederate money and presumably was considerably less wealthy after the war.

John Curry, Jr., on the other hand, sold land only in the 1820s, 1830s, and 1840s. He deeded some lands, mostly near the Plank Road, to his wife Maranda and son John R.A. in 1868. A John Curry is recorded as selling 240 ac in 1909 and 1914 (probably

John R.A.). However, he retained some holdings as one of these tracts is described as bordering his land. On the 1871 Boles map (See Figure 1), a tract near the Plank Road is labeled "Currys." This probably refers to John R.A. Curry (John Jr. died in 1868). Since the name is uncharacteristically pluralized, it may reflect that other Currys were also living at this location. A 1914 deed between John Curry and William Powell for 200 ac is the last land transaction involving a Curry of the John and Kesiah lineage. The female Currys married into families such as Meriwether, Mays, Brunson, Lanear, Roper, Dobey, and Devore. These families remained prominent in the area into the twentieth century. We did not attempt to trace the land holdings of the females.

The Curry-Roper Cemetery

At the request of Currytowne Associates, Southeastern Archeological Services, Inc., spent two field days examining the nineteenth century cemetery in Currytowne Station in order to confirm its boundaries and to determine if any graves had been disturbed by the grading of a road adjacent to the cemetery. In regard to these primary goals, we are reasonably sure that there are no graves outside of the limits we delineated (Figure 8) and are confident that no graves were seriously impacted during the road grading.

The cemetery had been long neglected and was discovered during initial surveying and planning of Currytowne Station. The cemetery boundary and the individual graves were located by visual inspection. Since most graves were apparent by their linear depressions and head and/or foot stones, we decided remote sens-

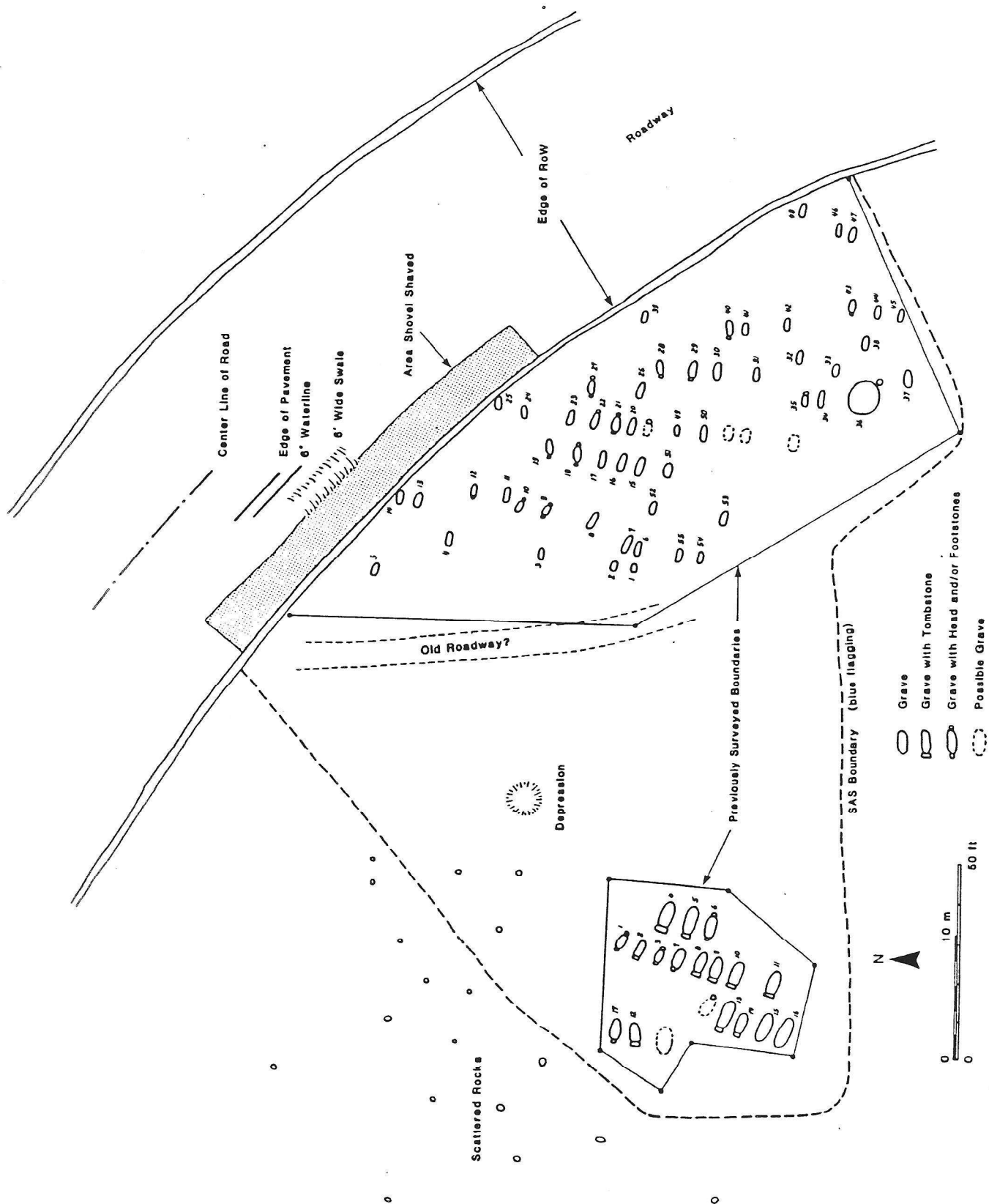


Figure 8. Sketch Map of Cemetery at Currytowne Station.

ing to detect graves was inappropriate and that careful inspection of the ground surface would provide a reasonable, if not absolute, assurance of the cemetery's extent.

Although one-third of the graves had tombstones or foot and/or headstones (i.e., fieldstones), most graves were recognized principally by their linear depressions. Since fieldstones occur naturally at the cemetery site, only those rocks associated with depressions were considered graves. Rocks on the surface were most numerous at the west end of the cemetery. These were neither patterned, nor associated with depressions. Also occurring in the cemetery area were small circular depressions caused by rotted tree stumps and amorphous depressions caused by heavy logging equipment (i.e., skidder trails). While infant burials would approach stump holes in size, stump holes are generally more circular and deeper than infant burials. The alignment with other graves was also considered with questionable depressions. Those questionable depressions somewhat in line with known graves were afforded greater scrutiny. Special attention was given to the periphery of the cemetery to insure that all graves in outlying areas were located.

The graves were clustered into two groups, about 75 ft apart. Our investigations revealed 55 graves in the eastern section of the cemetery and 17 graves in the western section (see Figure 8). In addition, there are three possible graves in the east section and two in the west section. We have considered both sets of graves as one cemetery. The western cluster contains ten graves with tombstones that have death dates ranging from 1817 to 1861. Of the ten tombstones with death dates, seven date to the

twelve-year period between 1836 and 1848, probably the time of its greatest use. Kesiah and John Curry were buried in the cemetery in 1817 and 1818, probably the first people buried there. Five of the eight tombstones of John and Kesiah's descendants belong to Lewis Curry's family who owned the cemetery plot from 1818, when John Curry died, until his own death in 1863. The eastern cluster, containing 55 (or perhaps 58) graves marked only by fieldstones, is probably the slave cemetery for the Curry plantation. Given the similarity in the vegetation and the nature of the depressions, the eastern cluster should date to approximately the same time as the western cluster.

The tombstones are weathered and difficult to read, which has created some discrepancies in the transcription of some birth and death dates. The following is our interpretation of the key information on the ten tombstones. The numbers correspond to the numbers in Figure 8 for the western cluster of graves.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 2. Susanna
Consort of B
Curry | b. Oct. 18, 1774
d. Aug. 19, 1840 |
| 4. Harriet Curry
Consort of John Curry | d. Sept. 24, 1845
53 years old |
| 5. John W.W. Curry
only son of John and
Harriet Curry | d. Dec. 19, 1839[?]
20 years old |
| 8. John Curry | d. Nov. 29, 1818 |
| 9. Kesiah Curry | d. July 31, 1817 |
| 10. Sarah C. Roper
eldest daughter of
Joel and Susan Roper | d. 15 Aug. 1845
15 years old |
| 11. Joel Roper | b. Feb. 13, 1806
d. May 13, 184[?]8 |

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| 12. Maria Phenix | d. Sept. 14, 1861 | |
| | aged 47 | |
| 13. Sarah Curry | d. 23rd Sept. 183[?]6 | |
| Consort of Lewis Curry | | |
| 14. Amy Roper | d. 14 Oct. 1843 | |
| daughter of Joel and Susan Roper | 14 months old | |

In the late 1700s, John Curry apparently owned a large tract of land on Sweetwater Creek and Hardy Branch which included the tract where the cemetery is located. His residence was probably on Sweetwater Creek south of Curryton Road. When John's property was divided among his children in 1818, Lewis Curry acquired the tract that contained the graves of John and Kesiah. We have no clues as to why this particular location was chosen for their graves. It is not close to any of the Curry's residences. Since Kesiah is the first person known to be buried there, perhaps it was a place special to her. Slaves were probably buried there after Kesiah's burial. A matriarch of a prominent family would not likely be buried in a slave cemetery. Assuming this, most of the slaves then probably belonged to Lewis Curry and perhaps to his son Joel Curry. Slaves belonging to other Currys, i.e., Benejah, John Jr., Joel, and Joel Roper, also could have been buried in this one cemetery. Since the number of slaves owned by the various Currys at various times is not known, any predictions on the death dates and owners of the slaves is speculative.

Why some Currys are not in this cemetery is clear. Some, such as William Curry, moved away. Others, such as Joel and Elizabeth Curry and John and Maranda Curry, died after the land had

passed from family hands. However, some of the unmarked graves may be Currys.

The cemetery never received special mention in the deed records. A graveyard is noted for orientation in a deed giving John Curry Jr.'s estate to his wife and son in 1868 (Deed Book 000, p. 510). But this must be the Mt. Zion Church cemetery since the deed also mentions a Nipper Branch, which is a branch of Little Horse Creek near Mt. Zion Church.

The cemetery property passed to Lewis Curry's widow at his death in 1863 and then was transferred to the Hancock family, probably at Mary Curry's death. A William Hancock owned land north of the cemetery (probably Currytown Station property) in 1863 as is shown on the Joel Curry plat of 1863 (see Figure 6). An 1867 deed (Deed Book MMM, p. 385) transferring land from John P. Mays to William H. Mays mentions "the estate of Lewis Curry", suggesting that the Curry land was in transition at the time. Delitha Hancock sold the Lewis Curry tract (105 ac of it) to Samuel E. Mays in 1880. Mays had bought other tracts in the area and almost certainly owned the cemetery tract at that time. A clear chain of title from May's ownership to the mid-twentieth century has not been established.

Curryton Academy

One of the known accomplishments of the Curry family was the assistance Joel Curry provided in the establishment of an academy in the Sweetwater Creek area. Joel donated (actually sold for \$1.00) 100 ac and contributed \$2000. His generosity was rewarded when the school was named Curryton Academy. The school was origi-

nally called Curryton Seminary (Deed Book HHH, p. 227) but was later referred to as Curryton Academy (C. Hill 1986). Mr. Claude M. Hill's (1986) history of the Academy will be summarized below.

On November 11, 1811, South Carolina enacted legislation to promote the establishment of academies in Edgefield County. In 1853 Reverend Samuel P. Getzen (neighbor of the Currys at Sweetwater) began soliciting for a school in the Sweetwater area. After several meetings and consultation with the Edgefield Baptist Association, a fund raising and organizational picnic was held at which 1200 to 1500 people were reported to have attended (The Edgefield Advertiser, August 17, 1853). Joel Curry had promised to donate 100 acres and \$30,000 was raised to build the school. An August 17th newspaper article mentioned that "the plan of the committee is to select a location on Mr. Joel Curry's land near Sweetwater Church." Another letter to the paper describes the place selected as "high and healthy and near the line that separates the oak and pine sections. It is on the Plank Road, leading from Cherokee Ponds to Anderson's Mill...." A September 23, 1853, notice in The Edgefield Advertiser solicited applications for the Seminary and for teachers, one for the males and one for the females. The school taught both sexes. Robert Meriwether (Joel Curry's son-in-law) was chairman of the board of trustees and, along with Joel, Hugh Shaw, Samuel Getzen, and A.J. Hammond, was instrumental in founding the school.

It was noted that by 1856 "a pleasant little village has sprung up around these academies [male and female]" (C. Hill 1986). By 1857 the school was providing boarding. Most students probably lived nearby and the others roomed with local families.

The "village" at the academies apparently refers to structures built and/or owned by Robert Meriwether and included a hotel, grist mill, and sawmill (C. Hill 1986). The 1871 Boles map (See Figure 1) shows three dots labeled as Curryton, two just north of Curryton Road and one just south of it. Whether these dots represent the Academy itself or "a little village" is not clear. A photograph in the possession of Claude Hill shows three dormitory-like structures and another building (for classes?) purported to be Curryton Academy. It appears from this photograph that the Academy provided lodging for some students. In 1886 the Academy was used for teaching public school and in 1888 a high school was begun in the old building. The building was destroyed by fire in 1892.

The location of Curryton Academy and its physical structures remain unclear. The academy seems to have been composed of separate male and female academies. Presumably both were on the same 100 ac lot donated by Joel Curry. How many buildings were associated with each, which were used as public schools in the 1880s, and which burned in 1892 is not clear. Judging by Claude Hill's photograph, the academy appears to have had 42 "dorm rooms" that could have housed 84 students. The various plats, maps, and verbal descriptions of the Academy give conflicting evidence of its location. The 1853 deed from Joel Curry to Curryton Seminary clearly states that the 100 ac is bounded on the north by the Plank Road and on all other sides by Joel Curry's property. The Academy property is not shown on the 1863 plat of Joel Curry's 1348 ac tract (See Figure 6). Furthermore, Joel owned land further east but not west of this tract. Therefore, the academy

most likely was about midway between Sweetwater Church and the eastern edge of the 1863 Joel Curry tract (see Figure 7). This placement accords with the plans of the organizing committee to have it "near Sweetwater Church." Today this location is in the vicinity of McDonald's Fish Camp, about a quarter-mile east of the Mill Road.

This placement conflicts, however, with a later newspaper editorial (The Edgefield Advertiser, November 5, 1856) which mentions that the schools are not more than 2 miles from both Sweetwater and Hardys Churches. The McDonald's Fish Camp location is about 3.5 miles from Hardys Church. Also, the 1871 Boles map shows "Curryton" almost exactly halfway between the two churches (See Figure 1). This midpoint location would be very close to the Joel Curry house. This location seems implausible, however, since no mention was made of the academy in the sale of the property in 1863. Although the location remains uncertain, the McDonald Fish Camp location seems the most likely area.