

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Jordan, Marion Jasper, Farm

other names/site number Jordan Place

### 2. Location

street & number R. Jordan Road, State Route 2145

not for publication

city, town Gulf

vicinity

state North Carolina

code NC

county Chatham

code 037

zip code 27256

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property

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

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>5</u>	<u>2</u> buildings
<u>1</u>	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
<u>6</u>	<u>2</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
Chatham County Multiple Resource Nomination

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

William S. Fair, Jr. 1-13-88  
Signature of certifying official Date

State Historic Preservation Officer  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 5. 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:)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

Agriculture/Subsistence - agricultural outbuilding

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

Agriculture/Subsistence -agric. outbl.

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Queen Anne

other: Folk Victorian

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Wood/Weatherboard

Wood/Shingle

roof Asphalt

other Wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See continuation sheet

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1. Marion Jasper Jordan House

The ca. 1893 farmhouse is a large two-story Late Victorian house having an abundance of exterior Queen Anne enrichments and an exceptional, intact all-wood exterior and interior which were consistent with lumberman Jordan's business. The intricacy and degree of intactness of the interior is found in few other houses of the period in Chatham County.<sup>1</sup> Set among a variety of trees and approached by a landscaped circular driveway and a walk between low boxwoods, the house occupies a 22.892 acre hometract on the eastern boundary of the original 1,032 acres of timberland owned by Jordan from 1893 to his death in 1932.

The form of the house (photograph #1)--three bays wide, center hall, double pile--was adapted from a simple foursquare folk plan and was, along with the more common I-plan and gable front and wing form, the choice of county residents for late-nineteenth century two-story houses.

The overall form and details of the house have been unusually well preserved, and the structure is in excellent condition. The only changes made to the exterior were the enclosure of the first level of the west porch in the 1960s and the replacement of the slate roof with asbestos shingles in the mid-1970s. The distinctive interior with its popular Victorian elements is entirely of naturally-finished wood which has never been painted with the exception of the kitchen and of the family room wainscot (though since restored to its original natural finish). Two bathrooms were added, probably in the 1920s. Mrs. Ralph Jordan, Sr. replaced the fireplaces in the present sitting and family rooms with French doors and had the family room walls above the wainscot covered to receive wallpaper in the 1940s.<sup>2</sup> The kitchen was remodeled in the 1950s, but retains the original mantel and an enclosed stairway leading to the second floor servant's room.

Constructed upon brick piers which have been infilled, the main block of the frame house is augmented by a two-story ell to the rear which is in keeping with the national convention of additions being markedly subordinate to the two-story massing. Three brick interior chimneys rise from gabled roofs originally covered in slate. In compliance with tradition, the rectangular proportions of the house re accentuated by corner boards which

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Jordan, Marion Jasper, Farm

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rise to plain caps and by boxed eaves which return in the gables. On the main block, late-nineteenth-century two-over-two windows are set in molded surrounds and the ell is lit by six-over-six windows.

Conforming to national Folk Victorian practice and with other porches in the Gulf area, such as the c.1890 Queen Anne replacement porch on the Haughton-McIver House (CH375,NR) and the less ornate but similar to the Jordan House porch on the former McRae Hotel (CH538), the nearly-full-facade, full-height entry porch is two-tiered. A clipped-gable porch roof is supported by turned posts and the porch is highlighted by sawtooth shingles in the gable and cornices, turned balusters, and scrolled drop-pendant brackets. A limited number of two-tiered porches appeared on kitchen ell's in the county and here one is enclosed on the first level(c.1960) and boasts chamfered posts, scrolled brackets and square balusters on the second story (photograph #2).

According to the present owner, there are up to eight different local woods used interiorly on the intricately patterned walls and on the floors and ceilings including heart pine, gum, ash, white and red oak, walnut, maple and poplar. The elaborate staircase has heavy turned newel posts, turned balusters, low risers for the convenience of the diminutive Mrs. Jordan, and a multitude of tongue-in-groove beaded boards placed in a variety of patterns (photographs #4 & 5 ). The straight staircase rises to the upper hall with its handsome barrel ceiling (photograph #6).

Door surrounds, many with corner blocks, vary from one to another as do the doors themselves and their hardware. Eight of the original ten different mantels remain and each is thought to have been designed by Mrs. Jordan following patterns in magazines of the period.<sup>2</sup> Two of the most interesting are the ornate parlor mantel with its mirrored overmantel (photograph #7) and the diningroom mantel with its incised design said to be an enlarged version of Mrs. Jordan's butter mold (photograph #8).

Few farm complexes built before 1900 in the county had the number and variety of supportive outbuildings as did the Jordan Place. In compliance with custom they were placed to the rear and side to be visually separated from the dwelling. Grouped to

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the rear of the house are:

2. Wellhouse: frame latticework construction, c. 1900. Contributing
3. Flowerhouse. Brick, shed roofed construction, c. 1900. Contributing (Photo #9)
4. Smokehouse. Frame, c. 1893. It has been moved from its original site and is being adapted as a studio, thus is Noncontributing. (Photo #10)
5. Blacksmith's Shop. Rectangular, gabled building with log walls, c. 1920. Contributing (Photo #11)
6. Caretaker's Cottage. Two-room, board and batten building with gable roof, shed porch, c. 1910. Contributing (Photo #12)
7. Barn/Carriage House. c. 1910. Ruinous condition, therefore Noncontributing. (Photo #13)
8. Hometract. Contributing site.  
The 22.892 acres containing the house and outbuildings are basically unchanged from the period of significance. A beautifully landscaped yard surrounds the house, and a grape arbor, reduced in size from the original, is sited to the east of the dwelling. The present owner recalls that several barns and stables, a sawmill, a two-room engine repair house, a coal mine, and six tenant houses as well as a large stocked pond were located on the original acreage. The owner theorizes that the tenant houses were vacated and subsequently destroyed and/or their lumber was used for other purposes. The house faces north, fronting the tracks of the former Norfolk and Southern railroad spur, which Jordan paid to have built. State Road 2145, the R. Jordan Road, runs between the house and the railroad tracks, and replaces an earlier dirt road.

## NOTES

1. Rachel Osborne, "Historical and Architectural Development of Chatham County," in publication. All statements following this pertaining to a comparison between the M. J. Jordan House and others in the county are based upon this work and a study of the survey files for the county, at the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office.
2. The two mantels which were removed are in storage on the property.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture  
Agriculture  
Commerce

Period of Significance

c.1893 - c. 1930

Significant Dates

c.1893

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 1STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Marion Jasper Jordan House, built c. 1893 by Jordan, who lived there until his death in 1932, is one of the most exuberant and best preserved examples of a Chatham County lumberman house. Although identified during the county inventory as being eligible for the Register, the Jordan House was not included in the 1985 "Chatham County Multiple Resource Nomination" due to time and financial constraints. In contrast to the common single pile I-house plan found throughout the county, the Jordan House follows a modern foursquare plan distinguished by an abundance of popular exterior Queen Anne enrichments and an ambitious intact wood interior of exceptional craftsmanship. Jordan was a lumberman of regional importance who displayed his commodities, his wife's design talents, and the skill of local craftsmen in the placement of at least eight wood types in twelve rooms, each with a different design, in nine mantels of varying patterns, and in a vigorous stair treatment. "Lumbermen houses," built from c. 1890 to the 1920s by commercial sawmillers and lumbermen in Chatham County, are among the largest and most architecturally flamboyant houses in the county. As discussed in the multiple resource nomination on page 7.19, the Jordan House clearly fits into this context, and should be added to the multiple resource nomination. The period of significance continues to c. 1930, when Jordan's lumber business ceased, because of the farm's significance in the areas of agriculture and commerce as the seat of a regionally important lumber dealership during the period.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Rachel Osborne's "Chatham County Multiple Resource Nomination," listed in the Register in 1985, and her manuscript, "Historical and Architectural Development of Chatham County," which is in the process of publication, contain much information on the Jordan House and its historical and architectural context. Much of this information is incorporated in the following discussion.

On August 29, 1893, Marion Jasper Jordan purchased 5.75 acres of land one mile east of Gulf, North Carolina for \$284.37 from Wesley S. and Ruth Russell.<sup>1</sup> It appears that shortly thereafter he began construction of the house which he and his wife designed using ideas gleaned from architectural magazines of the period.<sup>2</sup> The Jordan's second son, Ralph Benton Jordan, was born in the new house in 1893.<sup>3</sup> During the next twelve years the tract was expanded to 1,043 acres from which Jordan operated his successful lumber business and tenant farms on which sheep and hogs were raised and tobacco and cotton grown.<sup>4</sup>

The banks of the Deep River in the southern Piedmont provided the natural resources necessary for the rapid industrialization which took place there in the last half of the nineteenth century. Marion Jasper Jordan was representative of the entrepreneurial types who developed the coal, iron and sandstone mines and the lumber and grist mills of the area. With the establishment of the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railroad Company in 1881, which connected Sanford to Greensboro, the Deep River area was

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one of the most actively developing regions of the state until the early twentieth century when textile, furniture and tobacco manufacturing towns and cities elsewhere in the Piedmont overshadowed the importance of Chatham County's earlier industrial locations.

Chatham County's extensive timberlands, 65% of the county was forest land in 1915, provided a source of income for many individuals, but few were as successful as Jordan. A study of timber resources in the county in 1915 indicates that there were fifty tracts which exceeded 500 acres, but only eleven of over 1,000 acres.(5) Jordan's land purchases of 8.75 acres in 1898, 99 acres in 1904 and 932 acres in 1905 would indicate that his lumber business became quite successful in a short period of time as did many others in the state between 1899 and 1909.(6) The thirteenth census of the United States (1910) indicates a 131.2% increase in the value of forest products in North Carolina for that time period.(7) Jordan listed himself as a "Manufacturer of and Dealer in North Carolina Short Leaf Pine Lumber, Oak, Gum and Ash."(8)

Jordan was born in Chatham County in 1858, was married to Lydia Caroline Dorsett in Randolph County in 1885, and moved to Gulf from the Siler City area in the early 1890's.(9) There is no listing for an M. J. Jordan in Branson's Business Directories for the years 1884 to 1896 which implies that he was not independently involved in commerce, farming or lumbering in either Siler City or Gulf during that time period.(10)

A 1915 contract between the Norfolk and Southern Railroad Company and Jordan states that upon Jordan's request a side spur track was laid 1,220 feet from mile post #281 for Jordan's use upon his furnishing the cost of labor, cross and switch ties, and the grading of the road bed. The contract also stated that Jordan was to pay not less than \$4,000 annually in gross freight revenue to the railroad which suggests that his dealership extended beyond the county; the NSRR was established in 1910 to connect the Carolina Piedmont with Norfolk, Virginia.(11) The spur also provided transportation for the family and for numerous important guests such as the Countess Constance Hillyar DeCaen of France.(12)

In addition to his business interests, Jordan was a charter member of Chapter 465 of the Masonic Lodge who achieved the level of Master Mason in a notable month's time.(13) He served as a deacon of the Bethany Baptist Church and was remembered upon his death in 1932 as "one of the most prosperous, progressive, and public spirited citizens of the county."(14) Jordan remained active in farming and lumbering until a few years before his death.



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Lydia Jordan, who was a remarkable person in her own right, lived in the house until her death in 1949. She was born in Randolph County, was educated at the Mount Vernon Springs Academy and taught in Chatham County. Her main interest was in keeping the books not only for her husband's lumber business, but also for Caroline Farms and for the Bethany Baptist Church. Much of the design of the interior of the Jordan House is credited to her ability to adapt elements of plans found in the magazines of the period.

The Jordans had two sons, Clyde Raymond Jordan, Sr. and Ralph Benton Jordan, Sr. About 1937 Ralph Jordan and his wife, Gladys Rhodes Smith Jordan, came to live with his mother and to manage the family holdings. Upon the death of Ralph Jordan, Sr. in 1974, the property was inherited by his children, Ralph Benton Jordan, Jr. and Margaret Downing Jordan Ellis (Mrs. Wiley William Ellis). Mrs. Ellis purchased her brother's portion of the property and came from New Albany, Indiana, to live in her grandfather's house in 1978.(15)

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## NOTES

1. Register of Deeds Office, Chatham County, North Carolina, deed book D.G., p.536.
2. The magazines were found in the attic of the M. J. Jordan house.
3. Interview with Margaret Jordan Ellis, Gulf, 1987.
4. Deeds, Chatham County, plat book 7, p.32, a map of M. J. Jordan property drawn by Francis Deaton in 1917.
5. R. C. Journey, J. T. Miller, and S. Rankin Brown, Soil Survey of Chatham County, North Carolina (Washington: United States Department of Agriculture, Series 1933, No. 7: 1937.)
6. Deeds, Chatham County, deed book D.G., p. 535, deed book D.V., p. 394, and deed book D.V., p. 506.
7. Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Statistics for North Carolina, p. 635.
8. Printed order from, a copy is in the N. C. survey file.
9. Letter to Rachel Osborne from Margaret Jordan Ellis dated January 1, 1986, copy in the survey file.
10. Levi Branson (ed.), Branson's North Carolina Business Directory (Raleigh: Levi Branson, Office Publisher, 1884, 1890, 1896). Gulf entries.
11. Contract dated September 24, 1915, between Norfolk and Southern Railroad Company and M. J. Jordan of Gulf, North Carolina. Margaret Jordan Ellis has a copy of the contract.
12. An undated (believed by Margaret Jordan Ellis to be c.1920) newspaper article with the heading "Society: Pittsboro" a copy of which is in the survey file.
13. Information relayed by telephone to Margaret Jordan Ellis by the Chapter 465 Masonic Lodge in October, 1986.
14. "M. J. Jordan Laid to Rest Sunday A. M.", Sanford Herald, October 7, 1932, and "M. J. Jordan Passes", Chatham Record, undated. Copy in survey file.
15. Information in 1-27-1986 Osborne/Ellis letter.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 22.892 acres

UTM References

A 

1	7
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6	5	6	5	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	9	3	6	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

B 

1	7
---	---

6	5	7	0	8	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	9	3	6	1	9	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

C 

1	7
---	---

6	5	6	9	7	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	9	3	5	8	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

D 

1	7
---	---

6	5	6	4	9	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	9	3	5	9	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The acreage being nominated is the 22.892 acre hometract, being Tract #2, Parcel A, delineated in the enclosed survey, drawn by John P. Young, July 3, 1975. Scale 1" equals 200' .

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

Since the 1,043 acre farm owned by Jordan has dwindled down to sixty-three acres, only the hometract containing the farmhouse and outbuildings is being nominated. This 22.892 acre tract retains rural integrity from the period of significance. The rest of the sixty-three acres still in Jordan ownership was in orchards and fields during the period of significance, and has ~~now~~ reverted to woodland. A power line crosses the eastern eighteen acre section. ~~The land surrounding the farm is now owned by manufacturing companies.~~

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Martha A. Dreyer/ Historic Preservation Technologist  
 organization \_\_\_\_\_ date 6-1-87  
 street & number 508 W. Salisbury St. PO Box 866 telephone 919-542-4124  
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History of a Southern State. Chapel Hill: University of North  
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SECTION 10 (continued)

E. 17-657230-3935800

F. 17-656580-3935950

Marion Jasper Jordan Farm Site Plan

NOT TO SCALE

Arrows with numbers indicate location and direction of photos



