

NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
Office of Archives and History
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association Warehouse

Nashville, Nash County, NS1564, Listed 08/01/2024

Nomination by Mary Ruffin Hanbury, Hanbury Preservation Consulting

Photographs by Mary Ruffin Hanbury, April 2024



Exterior, South Elevation, View to Northwest



Interior, Central Corridor, View to South

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association Warehouse

Other names/site number: Nashville Building Supply

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

2. Location

Street & number: 723 Barnes Street

City or town: Nashville State: NC County: Nash

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide x local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

x A ___ B ___ C ___ D

	<u>6/27/24</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title: State Historic Preservation Officer	
Date	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property <u>x</u> meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
_____ Signature of commenting official:	_____ Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. 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>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>	structures

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0

0

objects

1

3

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: storage

Current Functions

WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Commercial Style

Materials:

Foundation: Brick

Walls: Brick

Roof: Metal

Summary Paragraph

Located south of downtown Nashville, the Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association Warehouse is a large, one-story, brick warehouse with a gable roof and stepped parapet end walls on the north and south elevations. The warehouse has an irregular series of windows, generally housed in masonry openings with segmental arches. Pedestrian and vehicular entrances are found on all four elevations. The roof supports a series of louvered, gable-roofed monitors and numerous skylights, which bring natural light into the interior spaces. The interior space has been subdivided and is oriented along a central, double-loaded corridor on a north-south axis. Heavy posts with diagonal upbracing and wooden roof trusswork remain largely exposed.

Narrative Description

Warehouse

The Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association Warehouse is located at the northeast corner of the intersection of Barnes Street and West Railroad Street, south of downtown Nashville and just

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north of the Carolina Coastal Railway. To the east, on the west side of South Barnes Street, are a series of industrial buildings constructed for the Nashville Building Supply Company, a former owner of the warehouse. These buildings are on a separate legal parcel and were not built as part of the tobacco cooperative movement.

The irregularly shaped parcel on which the warehouse sits takes up roughly the southwestern quarter of the block. There are no curbs on the streets to the south and west. Three tall, narrow, open, gable-roofed sheds stand at the east side of the lot, and the warehouse stands on the west side. A paved drive divides the warehouse from the sheds and leads to a paved parking area on a separate parcel to the north.

The warehouse is currently being rehabilitated with plans and construction reviewed by the North Carolina Historic Preservation Office.

The warehouse is a one-story masonry building, laid in six-course American bond. It has a gable roof with stepped parapet end walls at its north and south elevations. The parapet is symmetrical with five steps of graduated sizes flanking the central section. Each step has brick corbelling topped by coping that appears to be concrete. The building's footprint is not entirely rectangular, conforming to the street pattern at the corner of Barnes and West Railroad Streets creating an acute angle at its southwest corner and an obtuse one at its southeast corner. In response to storm damage in the 1990s, brick buttresses were added to the exterior walls. The metal roof features five wooden, square, louvered monitors each with metal, gable roofs.

The south elevation has three brick buttresses. It has three large masonry openings with flat metal lintels: two on the exterior bays and the third just west of center. Brick steps and a masonry deck have been added at the eastern entrance, and a broad masonry platform with a ramp access has been added at the west. The elevation has three windows with double rowlock segmental arches housing rectangular, metal, six-over-six, replacement metal sash windows, which is the typical window treatment. A glazed roll up door has been installed in the western entrance, and door assemblies with a central, glazed, single-leaf metal door flanked by fixed glazed panels were installed in the central and east opening.

The north elevation similarly has three brick buttresses. It has a single loading dock entrance with a concrete ramp at the west bay, which is currently enclosed with plywood. Five regularly spaced masonry window openings with double rowlock segmental arches are located east of the loading dock entrance, each housing a rectangular, metal, six-over-six, replacement metal sash window. A masonry deck along this elevation services two single-leaf entries with glazed doors that flank the central buttress.

The east elevation is divided by buttresses into 12 bays. The third, sixth and ninth bays from the north have large masonry openings with flat lintels, currently fitted with glazed door assemblies. All these openings have recently constructed brick steps to entrance platforms and the northern one also has an access ramp. The tenth and eleventh bays have double rowlock segmental arches, each housing a rectangular, metal, six-over-six, replacement metal sash window.

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The west elevation is divided by buttresses into 10 bays. The third, sixth, and ninth bay from the north have large masonry openings with flat metal lintels and a modern door assembly with sidelights and a transom. The fifth bay contains a rectangular, metal, six-over-six, replacement metal sash window with a flat lintel. The seventh bay features three masonry openings with double rowlock segmental arches, each housing a rectangular, metal, six-over-six, replacement metal sash window. The bay also houses a large masonry opening with a modern door assembly with sidelights and a transom. The elevation's eighth and tenth bays each contain masonry openings with double rowlock segmental arches, each housing a rectangular, metal, six-over-six, replacement metal sash window.

The interior of the tobacco warehouse, formerly largely open, is now subdivided and organized along a central, double-loaded corridor on a north-south axis. Original wooden floors remain with some replacement patching to replace rotten and termite-damaged sections. The interior of the exterior walls are exposed brick. The central portion of the roof is supported by a modified, wooden, double Fink truss. The east and west sections of the roof are supported by series of wooden posts with diagonal upbracing. Despite current rehabilitation work, most of the framing remains visible.

Rehabilitation plans, partially constructed, create a central hall on a north-south axis, making a double-loaded corridor with six subdivided spaces to the east and seven to the west that are currently framed but unfinished. Of those units on the west side of the corridor, the unit at the northwest corner of the building will be accessed from the exterior at the north and west. Three additional units on the west side will have exterior access as will three on the east side of the corridor. Four restrooms will be located along the central corridor, two on each side of the hall. A few extant wooden sliding "barn" doors have been salvaged and are rehung to be used in concert with modern exterior metal doors with glass panels.

Partition walls have been framed to display the posts and diagonal bracing. Where post and bracing have had termite damage, they have been selectively excised and spliced with metal supports of similar proportions.

The warehouse shares many of the common attributes of warehouses of the era as described by Nannie May Tilley, who notes that the most desirable are those of brick construction, like the Nashville Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association Warehouse. Numerous large skylights and windows, large expanses of open floor space, covered access for wagons or other vehicles through large access bays, and large roofs without center supports, such as seen in this building were also typical.¹

Sheds

The three open sheds east of the warehouse appear to have been built in two phases. The northern shed was built between 1983 and 1994 and the southern two were constructed between

¹ Nannie May Tilley, *The Bright-Tobacco Industry 1860-1929*. New York: Arno Press, 1972, p. 203

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1998 and 2005. All three sheds feature poured concrete pads, square wooden posts, and metal gable roofs. Likely built to provide extra covered stages for building materials, they now serve as staging areas for the local farmer's market.

Inventory

1. **Warehouse** 1922 Contributing Building
2. **North Shed** ca. 1990 Non-Contributing Structure
3. **Center Shed** ca. 2000 Non-Contributing Structure
4. **South Shed** ca. 2000 Non-Contributing Structure

Statement of Integrity

The Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association Warehouse remains in its original location and thus retains integrity of location. The warehouse remains south of the downtown area in an industrial location near the railroad. The area continues to be industrial in nature and the railroad remains. The three recent shed buildings have minimal adverse effects, giving it integrity of setting. Though currently being adapted for a new use, key aspects of design such as skylights, trusses, vehicular-sized entrances, massing, and parapet end walls remain. Internal structural members remain exposed, and external buttresses, while constructed after the period of significance, are unobtrusive, giving it a high degree of integrity of design. Brick walls, wooden floors, wooden trusses, and structural members all support a high degree of integrity of materials. Retention of the parapets, monitors, wooden trusses and structural members provide a high degree of integrity of workmanship. The typology of the warehouse with a large amount of extant historic fabric provides a high degree of feeling and association.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

- 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.
- 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 in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

AGRICULTURE

Period of Significance

1922-1927

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Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

B. W. Batchelor & Company, contractor

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association Warehouse is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Agriculture for its association with a brief but powerful movement to change the tobacco buying process in Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina in the 1920s. The Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association was established in 1920 to unite farmers within a single, large organization that would have the power to challenge the prevailing warehouse auction system of sales and undermine the capacity of a handful of large buyers to dominate the terms of sales. Buoyed by reports of farmers' cooperatives in other states, supported by a national movement to create state enabling legislation to support agricultural cooperatives, and lauded in many publications including the influential *Progressive Farmer*, the multi-state, nonprofit organization subscribed thousands of farmer members and controlled dozens of warehouses by buying extant buildings, securing leases, or spurring new construction. The Nashville warehouse in Nashville, North Carolina is one of an unknown number of buildings erected specifically to serve the cooperative movement. As quickly as the cooperative grew, so did it decline, undone by rumors of mismanagement and self-dealing fueled by big tobacco interests and others whose livelihood was threatened by the cooperative. The Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association was assigned to a receiver in 1926 and its assets were liquidated. The warehouse's period of significance runs from 1922, the year of its construction, to 1927 when it was sold to Nashville Building Supply.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association

The growth and production of tobacco have been a vital part of the agricultural economy of the American south from the period of European settlement through the late twentieth century. The growing, harvesting, curing, and aging of tobacco is an arduous process that varies with the type of tobacco and its use. Flue-cured, or bright leaf, tobacco is the most predominant type of tobacco grown in eastern North Carolina.

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By the early twentieth century, most of the tobacco crop in North Carolina was bought by one of a handful of large companies through the warehouse auction system. Crops were brought to a warehouse, piled into baskets, then weighed and in some cases, graded based on quality. Groups of buyers, auctioneers, and sellers would move along the aisles of tobacco, auctioning the baskets at rapid-fire speed.

This process of selling was briefly challenged in the 1920s by the organization of farmers cooperatives. In the early twentieth century, a movement of agricultural cooperatives spread across the country. After some initial efforts in Kentucky and Tennessee, in some cases marked by violence and vandalism, a broader effort based on west coast models proliferated. An attorney named Aaron Sapiro became the chief proselytizer for agriculture cooperatives nationally, working with federal agencies, legislators, and state governments to establish a “uniform cooperative marketing statute across the United States.”²

The rapid early growth of the tobacco cooperative in North Carolina was fueled by many factors. The existing auction system had no grading of tobacco quality at worst, and inconsistent grading at best. The lack of a centralized organization to track sales meant that disparities in sales prices could not be monitored.³ The capacity of large tobacco purchasers to dominate the market and their ability to re-dry and store tobacco gave them power to outlast market fluctuations.⁴ Most farmers lacked the resources to re-dry and store their own crops. Further, they often mortgaged their crop to cover material and labor costs for the season and thus, were obligated to sell at harvest to meet their obligations to lien holders regardless of whether the current prices were better than they might demand if they had the capacity to re-dry.⁵

In eastern North Carolina, after many years of high prices, the price of tobacco dropped. The 1920 harvest was plagued by notably high labor costs and overproduction that drove prices down. Nannie May Tilley, in her tome *The Bright-Tobacco Industry 1860-1929*, notes that some warehouses in Vance, Pitt, Lenoir, Craven, and Wilson counties closed in 1920 for fear of violence by tobacco farmers angered by the low tobacco prices.⁶ Clarence Poe, the publisher of the *Progressive Farmer*, had been an enthusiast for cooperative ventures for some time and saw an opportunity to persuade farmers to support a tobacco cooperative, or coop, in the wake of the depressed market of 1920. His influential publication became a vocal proponent of the movement.

In the fall of 1920 and into early 1921, organizing meetings were held throughout Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Aaron Sapiro, a national advocate for agricultural

² John Hanna, “Agricultural Cooperation in Tobacco,” *Law and Contemporary Problems* 1, no. 3 (1934): 292–324. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1189464>.

³ John J. Scanlan, *Business Analysis of the Tobacco Growers' Cooperative Association*, United States Department of Agriculture Circular No. 100 October 1929, 10.

⁴ John J. Scanlan, *Business Analysis of the Tobacco Growers' Cooperative Association*, United States Department of Agriculture Circular No. 100 October 1929, 10.

⁵ John J. Scanlan, *Business Analysis of the Tobacco Growers' Cooperative Association*, United States Department of Agriculture Circular No. 100 October 1929, 11.

⁶ Nannie May Tilley, *The Bright-Tobacco Industry 1860-1929* (New York: Arno Press, 1972), 452.

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cooperatives who became a lawyer for the tri-state venture, attended many of the meetings. Clarence Poe began publishing a series of editorials supporting a cooperative in the *Progressive Farmer*. In one entitled “The Fight is On, and Win We Must,” Poe wrote, “We have begun a fight that can end only in victory. We are at least getting actual fruits from all the long struggle towards cooperation and the betterment of farming conditions...We have at last found a plan that works.”⁷

Coop membership agreements were drafted that established crop limits and exclusive sales agreements for a five-year term. Subscription drives were conducted throughout the Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina tobacco regions, but membership was insufficient to begin the process in time for the 1921 harvest. Despite gains by the organizers, some farmers remained suspicious as did warehouse operators and buyers.

In 1922, the Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association, sometimes referred to as the Tri-State Association, was organized with a geographical range of Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. The nonprofit organization was incorporated in North Carolina for the purpose of “promoting, fostering, and encouraging the business of marketing tobacco cooperatively; for reducing speculation; for stabilizing the local tobacco markets; for cooperatively and collectively handling the problems of tobacco growers; and for other pertinent purposes.”⁸ The association was founded on the strength of 64,000 contracts representing an estimated fifty-seven percent of the upcoming year’s tobacco crop⁹ and was viable only after state legislatures passed laws to allow the creation of agricultural cooperatives over the objections of the auction houses.

In addition to enabling legislation, public relations also bolstered the establishment of the cooperative. In a January 1922 meeting in Raleigh, North Carolina, the importance of the support of local newspapers and agricultural publications was noted: “the services of Doctor Poe of the *Progressive Farmer*, were recognized by a rising vote of thanks, while the *News and Observer* and those newspapers which have loyally supported the organization of the association or extended a vote of appreciation and thanks.”¹⁰ The paper quoted a congratulatory telegram from Aaron Sapiro the following week:

the tobacco industry should now be a source of prosperous living to every person concerned in the legitimate tobacco activities, in production as well as buying and manufacturing. The tobacco growers have taken the first great step to achieve independence for themselves and comfort and security for their families. They've completed the largest cooperative marketing associated in the United States without creating class antagonism or breeding internal warfare. Tobacco growers have united for

⁷ Clarence Poe, “The Fight is On, and Win We Must,” *The Progressive Farmer* January 22, 1921, 6.

⁸ John J. Scanlan, *Business Analysis of the Tobacco Growers' Cooperative Association*, United States Department of Agriculture Circular No. 100 October 1929, 46.

⁹ John J. Scanlan, *Business Analysis of the Tobacco Growers' Cooperative Association*, United States Department of Agriculture Circular No. 100 October 1929, 13.

¹⁰ “Tobacco Growers are Ready for Cooperative Marketing,” *The News and Observer*, January 6, 1922, 1.

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the ultimate good of the tobacco industry and for the immediate and lasting prosperity of themselves and their communities.¹¹

While west coast fruit cooperatives offered a variety of services to their members, the appeal of the tobacco cooperative was chiefly its potential to harness the collective power of the farmers to exact higher purchase prices from the big tobacco companies. Despite Sapiro's optimistic characterization of harmony, it appears that the movement's growth was based to some degree on discord and dissatisfaction with the existing hierarchy. In an article published in *Law and Contemporary Problems* in 1934, John Hanna suggests that enmity towards the prevailing power structure combined with a naïvely unrealistic expectations about benefits drove membership. "The campaign for members was conducted to an unfortunate degree upon the basis of hostility to existing agencies dealing with tobacco. Many rash promises were made to the farmers themselves . . . The idea of monopoly control and the benefits to come from it were those most influential with the membership."¹²

The cooperative grew incredibly quickly, boosted by the commitment of \$30,000,000 in financing from the War Finance Corporation.¹³ Tilley describes the juggernaut of growth: "In January 1922, the association held no funds save a paltry membership fee, no warehouses, and no tobacco . . . One year later its directors controlled a majority of the auction houses in three states and had advanced \$19,248,895.64 on the 1922 crop."¹⁴ The cooperative purchased warehouses in three states with a value totaling over \$2 million and rented an additional 136 in addition to securing re-drying plants.¹⁵ The warehouses were coordinated under five regional warehouse corporations, corresponding to five regional pools: one in South Carolina, two in Virginia, and two in North Carolina, including the Eastern Carolina Corporation.¹⁶ In his post-mortem analysis of the cooperative, John Scanlan argued that five separate warehouse organizations, while not efficient, was dictated by the need to have separate entities capable of issuing warehouse receipts to be used as collateral.¹⁷

The cooperative contract permitted the operation of warehouses in any community where 100 or more coop members petitioned for its lease or construction. These warehouses were run as nonprofit entities, built and supported by marketing fees from the members they served.¹⁸ By the summer of 1922, the cooperative and its associated warehouse concerns had bought, leased, or

¹¹ "Tender Growers Warehouse Plant," *The News and Observer*, January 11, 1922, 16.

¹² John Hanna, "Agricultural Cooperation in Tobacco," *Law and Contemporary Problems* 1, no. 3 (1934): 292-324. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1189464>.

¹³ "Thirty Million Dollars for Co-operative Association," *The Graphic*, June 29, 1922, 1.

¹⁴ Nannie May Tilley, *The Bright-Tobacco Industry 1860-1929* (New York: Arno Press, 1972), 460.

¹⁵ Nannie May Tilley, *The Bright-Tobacco Industry 1860-1929* (New York: Arno Press, 1972), 464.

¹⁶ John J. Scanlan, *Business Analysis of the Tobacco Growers' Cooperative Association*, United States Department of Agriculture Circular No. 100 October 1929, 21.

¹⁷ John J. Scanlan, *Business Analysis of the Tobacco Growers' Cooperative Association*, United States Department of Agriculture Circular No. 100 October 1929, 63.

¹⁸ John J. Scanlan, *Business Analysis of the Tobacco Growers' Cooperative Association*, United States Department of Agriculture Circular No. 100 October 1929, 63.

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contracted to build 214 tobacco warehouses across the tri-state region.¹⁹ In order to placate existing warehouse concerns, the cooperative committed to buying existing enterprises where there was a willing seller.²⁰ Though some established warehouse concerns sold to the cooperative, there were pockets of resistance among warehousemen, notably in Wilson, Rocky Mount, Greenville, and Kinston.

The financial relationships among regional growers, the cooperative warehouse associations, and the cooperative itself were remarkably complex, including the issuance and retirement of preferred stock shares and bonds. Common stock in warehouses would accrue to growers as their accumulated marketing fees increased to meet the share price. Common stock was only available to growers and constituted the only voting shares of the corporations. The warehouse corporations

were bound to the parent association by a cross contract which provided that the Tobacco Growers' Cooperative Association should undertake to pay all the expenses of operation, and dividends and payments on the preferred stock and bonds as they fell due, in return for the use of the property, and that the warehousing corporations be operated on a nonprofit basis. The nature of the relationship was virtually as follows: The tangible property was in the hands of the various corporations, whereas the operation of the warehouse was in the hands of the association warehouse department, one of the main departments of the parent association.²¹

The cooperative and its associated warehouse organizations purchased properties aggressively and at premiums to reduce competition for farm products and to garner goodwill among warehouse operations that chose to sell out rather than compete with the cooperative.²²

As quickly as the cooperative grew, so it collapsed. Multiple factors contributed to the failure, including opposition from nonmember farmers, buyers and warehousemen; resistance to the smaller, localized warehouse network from business interests in larger warehouse towns; poor management; excessive salaries and costs for administration; agitation by the editorial pages of *Southern Tobacco Journal* and *Tobacco Farmer*; boycotts by the Imperial Tobacco and American Tobacco Companies; overly optimistic sales projections; and rumors of self-dealing. Despite many successful enforcement lawsuits, some members violated their contracts by selling their crops at non-cooperative warehouses and some even sold under their wives' names to avoid detection. Executive offices split between Raleigh and Richmond were inefficient and expensive. Purchase of numerous warehouses at inflated rates also contributed to the collapse of the

¹⁹ John J. Scanlan, *Business Analysis of the Tobacco Growers' Cooperative Association*, United States Department of Agriculture Circular No. 100 October 1929, 65.

²⁰ Max Abernethy, "Holdouts Are Only Saving Coops Lot Of Money, Assert," *The Daily Free Press*, April 12, 1922, 1.

²¹ John J. Scanlan, *Business Analysis of the Tobacco Growers' Cooperative Association*, United States Department of Agriculture Circular No. 100 October 1929, 64.

²² John J. Scanlan, *Business Analysis of the Tobacco Growers' Cooperative Association*, United States Department of Agriculture Circular No. 100 October 1929, 67.

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movement.²³ Ad hominem attacks against executive Aaron Sapiro included claims of “bolshevism” and outright antisemitism.²⁴ The cooperative made changes to address concerns and improve business practices, and in fiscal year 1925-26, considered transitioning from a single cooperative to four smaller separate associations.²⁵

From February to June of 1926, several plaintiffs participated in numerous legal actions to dissolve the cooperative. Chiefly made up of established tobacco interests and contract violators, this group simultaneously began a whisper campaign across several publications, sowing doubts about the cooperative, echoed in their legal filings. The cooperative and its supporters launched a counteroffensive of paid advertisements in local newspapers rebutting the detractors’ claims.

On June 19, 1926, the court assigned the cooperative and its assets to a receiver.²⁶ The court’s decision was a surprise as the cooperative was fiscally solvent. However, the court noted numerous breaches of contracts by members and that the 1926 harvest would fail to meet the cooperative’s financial obligations. The court decided that it would be in the best interests of the association and its members to assign the organization to receivers and to release the farmers from their contracts. The receivers sold the cooperative’s warehouses and liquidated its other assets to pay creditors.

Nashville’s Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association Warehouse

In April 1922, the *Nashville Graphic* reported that a group of citizens met in the mayor’s office in Nashville, North Carolina to discuss the prospect of building a tobacco warehouse to receive the annual harvest of the Tobacco Growers Cooperative. By May, the movement to erect a warehouse had succeeded. A headline on the *Nashville Graphic* announced, “Nashville Will Provide Warehouse Cooperative Marketing Association-Business men and Citizens Cooperating - Great Movement of Such Vital Import to The Tobacco Growers of Nash.” The article reported that half the money needed to build the warehouse had already been secured and that construction would begin in a matter of weeks. A week later, the *Graphic* reported “a receiving station at Nashville is practically assured. The men who are behind the warehouse mean business and will successfully finance the proposition.”²⁷

The cooperative committed to operating a warehouse in any market in which at least one hundred members requested it. The cooperative also committed to buying existing warehouses. The expansionist policies of the cooperative relative to warehouses became a point of friction in the larger tobacco community. Max Abernethy in the *Daily Free Press* observed that the resistance of larger warehouses to participate “will mean that the smaller markets, which are nearer the growers, can be developed as concentration points, and will prevent the association

²³ John Hanna, “Agricultural Cooperation in Tobacco,” *Law and Contemporary Problems* 1, no. 3 (1934): 292–324. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1189464>.

²⁴ Sapiro was Jewish.

²⁵ John J. Scanlan, *Business Analysis of the Tobacco Growers' Cooperative Association*, United States Department of Agriculture Circular No. 100 October 1929, 116.

²⁶ A receiver is a court-appointed third party assigned to manage a business or property.

²⁷ S. F. Austin, “Receiving Station at Nashville Assured,” *The Nashville Graphic*, May 18, 1922, 1.

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from having to go to the necessity of raising money to purchase or lease the warehouses in the big tobacco centers.”²⁸ Indeed, the proliferation of smaller warehouses in smaller communities and their impact became a point of contention with the larger regional tobacco operations.

Incorporated in June 1922, the Eastern Carolina Warehousing Corporation was established by many of the men who promoted the Tobacco Cooperative, including Clarence Poe and J. Y. Joyner.²⁹ Stock in the corporation was made available to members of the Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association. In its articles of incorporation, the corporation expresses its intention to “act as a public warehouseman . . . and as such public warehouseman it shall have the power to engage in the business of a public warehouseman and to receive, grade, handle, prize, store and take care of tobacco, and to issue warehouse receipts . . .”³⁰ The corporation operated throughout eastern North Carolina as its name suggests.

By June 1922, a site for the Nashville Warehouse had been selected. The location at Barnes and Depot Streets provided access to the railroad and was “within a few feet of the hard surface street.”³¹ The new brick building would measure 100 feet by 200 feet and would be “made accessible from all sides for the delivery of tobacco by members of the association.”³² Later that month a contract was let to B. W. Batchelor & Company for the construction of the building, which was to be completed in 60 days at an estimated cost of \$20,000. By mid-September, advertising notices in the local paper alerted farmers that the warehouse was open for deliveries. At this point, the parcel on which the warehouse was built was owned by Nashville Realty Corporation, but in October 1922 ownership passed to The Nashville Enterprises Incorporated, an organization with a similar leadership structure.³³ In May 1923, the warehouse was purchased by the Eastern Carolina Warehousing Corporation of Wake County.

The Nashville Graphic was a strong local advocate for the warehouse and the cooperative in general. It opined:

it is to the interest of every businessman in Nashville to encourage those who have not yet signed to do so. It means more money paid to the farmers here and that means more business for our merchants and better deposits for our bank. It is to the interest of the growers who have signed to induce every non member they can to join our ranks; the greater the sign up the stronger the association and surer the success. It is to the interest of every grower to join the association, because it ensures better prices, standardizes grades, and stabilizes prices.³⁴

²⁸ Abernethy, Max, “Holdouts Are Only Saving Coops Lot Of Money, Assert,” *The Daily Free Press*, April 12, 1922, 1.

²⁹ In addition to being a farmer and educator, Joyner served as the state’s Superintendent of Public Instruction 1902-1919.

³⁰ Eastern Carolina Warehouse Corporation Articles of Incorporation, June 29, 1922.

³¹ “Site Selected for Erection of Co-Operative Warehouse,” *The Nashville Graphic*, June 15, 1922.

³² “Site Selected for Erection of Co-Operative Warehouse,” *The Nashville Graphic*, June 15, 1922.

³³ Nash County Deed Book 279, page 1.

³⁴ *The Nashville Graphic*, May 18, 1922, 1.

Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association Warehouse

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With the demise of the Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association and its related companies in June 1926, the Nashville warehouse functioned temporarily as cotton storage facility.³⁵ Notice of sale for the warehouse appeared in newspapers in early 1927. The Nashville warehouse was scheduled to be auctioned off along with other cooperative warehouses owned by operated by the eastern holding company in Littleton, Rocky Mount, Bailey, Wilson, Fremont, Kenley, Smithfield, Goldsboro, Maysville, New Bern, Vanceboro, Washington, Windsor, Robersonville, Greenville, Farmville, Ayden, Snow Hill, Warsaw, Wallace, Whiteville, Fair Bluff, Proctorville, Rowland, Apex, Fuquay, and Zebulon.

On March 12, 1927, the warehouse was sold to G. M. Strickland for \$6,500, a fraction of the estimated construction cost of five years earlier. Mr. Strickland owned the Nashville Building Supply Company, which he moved into the warehouse and later to buildings on adjacent properties. Strickland was intimately familiar with the building, having been a member of the building committee responsible for its construction.³⁶

The supply company and its real estate passed to several owners before the business's closing in 2021. The warehouse was sold to the current owner, Hurt, LLC., is redeveloping the property into multiple retail units.

³⁵ "Cotton Storage Warehouse Provided For in Nashville," *The Nashville Graphic*, October 14, 1926, 1.

³⁶ "Site Selected for Erection of Co-Operative Warehouse," *The Nashville Graphic*, June 15, 1922.

Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association Warehouse
Name of Property

Nash County, North Carolina
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

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County and State

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Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association Warehouse
Name of Property

Nash County, North Carolina
County and State

“Would Build Warehouse.” *The Nashville Graphic*, April 13, 1922.

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): NS0184

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 1.31

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

1. Latitude: 35.968942° Longitude: -77.971302°

Verbal Boundary Description

The Nashville Tobacco Cooperative Warehouse is all of that Nash County parcel 345050, also known by PIN #380006493177.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes all of the property historically associated with Nashville’s Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association Warehouse. It excludes the parcel at its west, across South

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Barnes Street, containing buildings associated with Nashville Building Supply as the subject property is nominated solely for its role as a tobacco warehouse.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Mary Ruffin Hanbury
organization: Hanbury Preservation Consulting
street & number: P O Box 6049
city or town: Raleigh state: NC zip code: 27628
e-mail maryruffin@hanburypreservation.com
telephone: 919.828.1905
date: 10/25/2022; revised 7/24/23; revised 4/11/24

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5- or 15-minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association Warehouse
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Nash County, North Carolina
County and State

Photo Log

For all photos-

Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association Warehouse

Nashville, Nash County, North Carolina

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

Photographed April 11, 2024

Exterior, South Elevation, View to
Northwest
1 of 22.

Exterior, West Elevation, View to
Northeast
2 of 22.

Exterior, West Elevation, View to
Southeast
3 of 22.

Exterior, North Elevation, View to South
4 of 22.

Exterior, Northeast Corner, View to
Southwest
5 of 22.

Exterior, Southeast Corner, View to
Northwest
6 of 22.

Exterior, South Elevation & Sheds,
View to North
7 of 22.

Exterior, Sheds, View to Southeast
8 of 22.

Exterior, Sheds, View to Northwest
9 of 22.

Interior, Central Corridor, View to South
10 of 22.

Interior, Central Corridor, View to North
11 of 22.

Interior, Southeastern suite, View to East
12 of 22.

Interior, Southeastern suite, View to
Southwest
13 of 22.

Interior, Southwestern suite, View to
Southwest
14 of 22.

Interior, Suite east of hall, second from
the south, View to East
15 of 22.

Interior, Suite west of hall, second from
the south, View to West
16 of 22.

Interior, Suite west of hall, third from
the south, View to West
17 of 22.

Interior, Suite east of hall, fourth from
the south, View to Northwest
18 of 22.

Interior, Suite west of hall, fifth from the
south, View to West
19 of 22.

Interior, Northeastern Suite, View to
Northeast
20 of 22.

Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association Warehouse

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Interior, Northwestern Suites, View to
Southeast
21 of 22.

Interior, Northwestern Suites, View to
North
22 of 22.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations 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.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

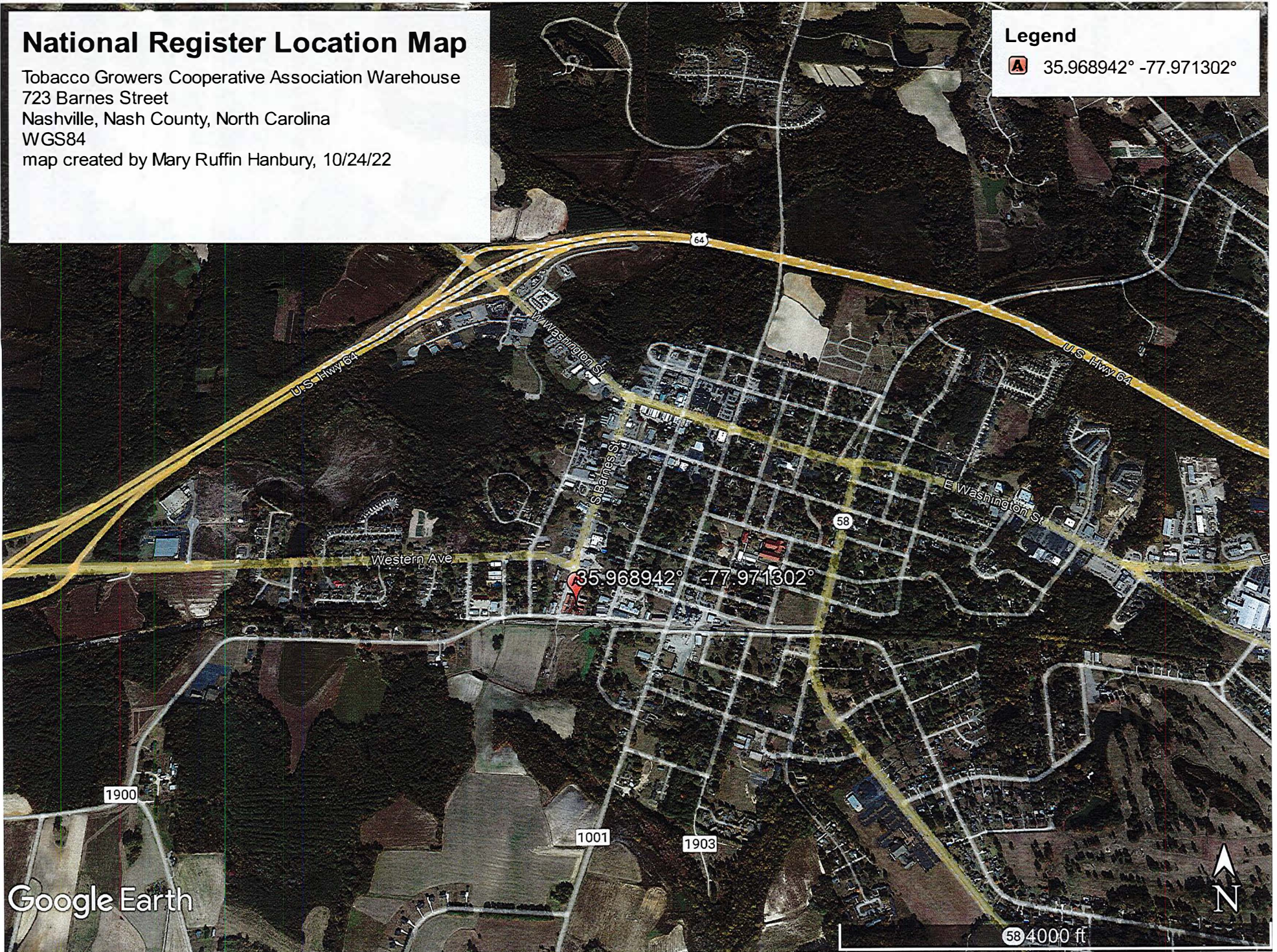
The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

National Register Location Map

Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association Warehouse
723 Barnes Street
Nashville, Nash County, North Carolina
WGS84
map created by Mary Ruffin Hanbury, 10/24/22

Legend

 35.968942° -77.971302°



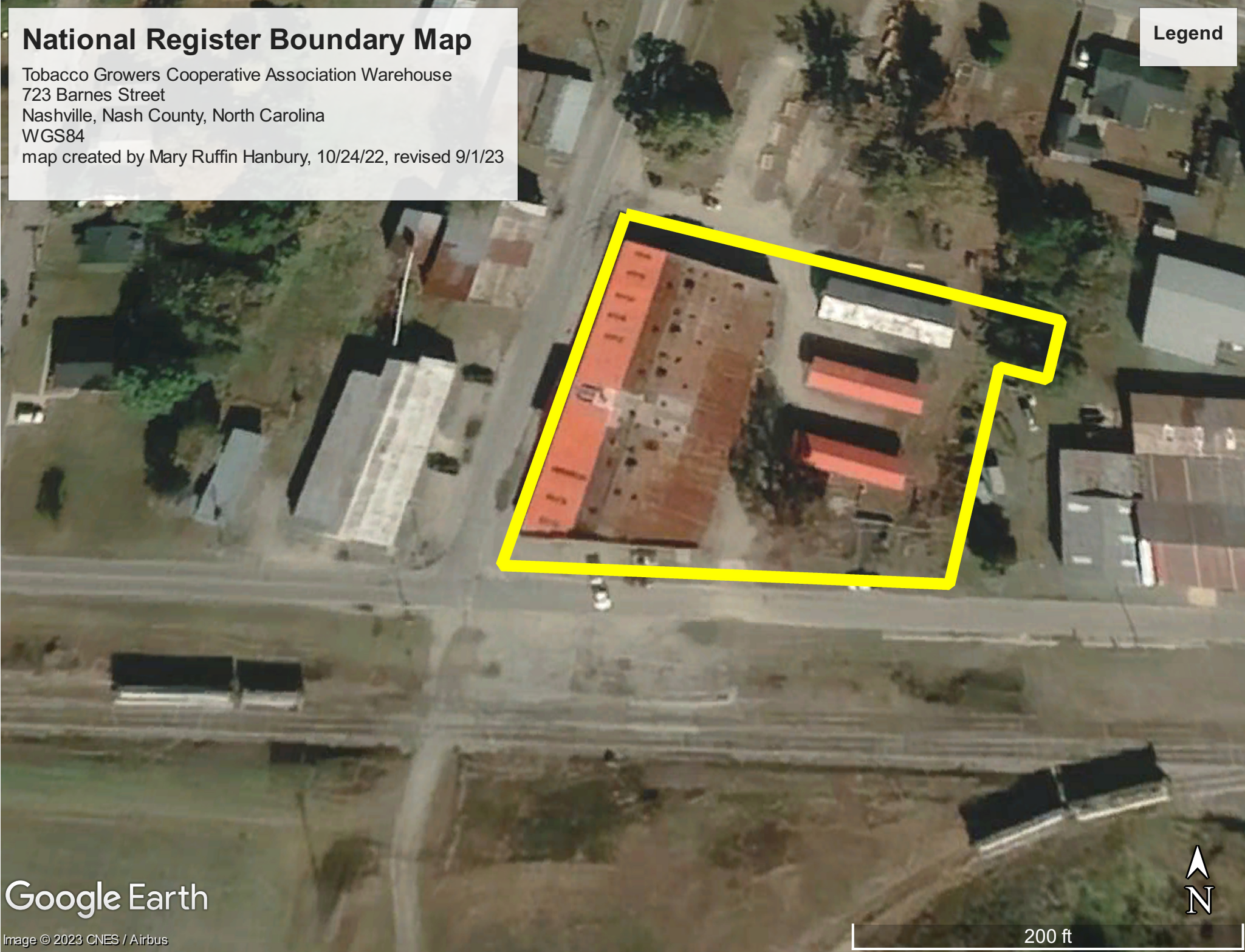
Google Earth

58 4000 ft

National Register Boundary Map

Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association Warehouse
723 Barnes Street
Nashville, Nash County, North Carolina
WGS84
map created by Mary Ruffin Hanbury, 10/24/22, revised 9/1/23

Legend



Google Earth

Image © 2023 CNES / Airbus



200 ft