NPS Form 10-900

OMB No. 1024-0018

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Stringfellow Orchards
Other name/site number:
Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: 7902 Highway 6
City or town: Hitchcock State: Texas County: Galveston
Not for publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐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 ☑ 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.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:
☐ national ☐ statewide ☑ local

Applicable National Register Criteria: ☑ A ☐ B ☑ C ☐ D

Mark Wolfe State Historic Preservation Officer 1/2/13
Signature of certifying official / Title **Date**

Texas Historical Commission
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting or other official **Date**

State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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:

Joe Edson K. Beall 2.27.13
Signature of the Keeper **Date of Action**

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

x	Private
	Public - Local
	Public - State
	Public - Federal

Category of Property

x	building(s)
	district
	site
	structure
	object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	2	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	2	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: DOMESTIC/single dwelling; AGRICULTURE/agricultural outbuilding

Current Functions: WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification: LATE VICTORIAN

Principal Exterior Materials: Wood

Narrative Description (see continuation sheets 7-6 through 7-8)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

Criteria Considerations: N/A

Areas of Significance: Agriculture, Architecture

Period of Significance: 1883 – 1894

Significant Dates: 1883, 1894

Significant Person (only if criterion b is marked):

Cultural Affiliation (only if criterion d is marked):

Architect/Builder: Volk, George M.

Narrative Statement of Significance (see continuation sheets 8-9 through 8-14)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (see continuation sheet 9-15)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

x State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission, Austin*)
_ Other state agency
_ Federal agency
_ Local government
_ University
_ Other -- Specify Repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): NA

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: approximately 9 acres

Coordinates (either UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates)

NAD 1927 ☐ NAD 1983 ☑

Latitude: 29.349873 Longitude: -95.017105

Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation page 10-16

Boundary Justification: See continuation page 10-17

11. Form Prepared By (with assistance from Carlyn Hammons, THC Historian)

Name/title: Samuel L. Collins, III
Organization: Property Owner
Street & number: P.O. Box 446
City or Town: Hitchcock State: Texas Zip Code: 77563
Email: mrslc3@hotmail.com
Date: July 19, 2012

Additional Documentation

Maps (see continuation sheet Map-18 through Map-20)

Additional items (see continuation sheets Figure-21 through Figure-27)

Photographs

Name of Property: Stringfellow Orchards
City or Vicinity: Hitchcock
County, State: Galveston County, Texas
Photographer: Samuel L. Collins, III
Date Photographed: December 20, 2012
No. of Photos: 10

All photos printed on HP Premium Plus Photo Paper with HP Vivera inks.

Photo 1: TX_Galveston County_Stringfellow Orchards_0001.tif
South elevation, main house. Camera facing north.

Photo 2: TX_Galveston County_Stringfellow Orchards_0002.tif
Southeast oblique, main house. Camera facing northwest.

Photo 3: TX_Galveston County_Stringfellow Orchards_0003.tif
Close-up of south (primary) entry, main house. Camera facing north.

Photo 4: TX_Galveston County_Stringfellow Orchards_0004.tif
East elevation, main house. Camera facing west.

Photo 5: TX_Galveston County_Stringfellow_Orchards_0005.tif
North elevation, partial, main house. Camera facing approximately southeast.

Photo 6: TX_Galveston County_Stringfellow Orchards_0006.tif
West elevation, main house. Camera facing east.

Photo 7: TX_Galveston County_Stringfellow Orchards_0007.tif
Interior room, first floor, main house. Camera facing approximately southeast.

Photo 8: TX_Galveston County_Stringfellow Orchards_0008.tif
Interior stairs, newel post, first floor, main house. Camera facing approximately west.

Photo 9: TX_Galveston County_Stringfellow Orchards_0009.tif
South elevation, c. 1890 barn (contributing). Camera facing approximately north.

Photo 10: TX_Galveston County_Stringfellow Orchards_0010.tif
West elevation of c. 1940s barn (noncontributing). Camera facing east.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Narrative Description

Stringfellow Orchards is located in Hitchcock, on the mainland of Galveston County, along Highway 6. Pioneer horticulturalist Henry Martyn Stringfellow established the thirty-acre orchard in 1883, and completed his home there the following year. The 1.5-story house is an example of vernacular Victorian residential architecture with Queen Anne form and spindlework detailing. Just over nine acres of the original property remains intact and is covered in lush vegetation, some of which is likely vestiges of the nineteenth century horticultural activities. Also on the property are a large wood barn which dates from the period of significance, and two smaller storage sheds erected in the 1940s.

General Setting

The nominated property sits in the heart of downtown Hitchcock, a small community on the Galveston County mainland. Once a large rural tract, the property is now a third of its original size and is surrounded by both commercial and residential properties. The 9.4 acre property is located at the northwest corner of the intersection of State Highway 6 and Farm-to-Market 519 (also known as Main Street). Modern commercial properties, including restaurants, filling stations and a grocery store line both streets to the south and east of the nominated property; it is bordered by residential properties on the north and west.

The main entrance to the property is located off of Highway 6. A gravel driveway, lined by mature oak and pine trees, leads north for approximately 300 feet before turning west to make a wide U-turn and leading back to Highway 6, exiting about 100 feet west of the main entrance. While a small portion of the eastern half of the property is open and grassy, the majority of the property is shaded beneath large oak, pine, pecan, and magnolia trees, as well as a few cedar, pear, and pomegranate trees. There is also a single Satsuma orange tree. While the area immediately surrounding the house is purposefully landscaped, the remainder of the property is more of a naturalistic wildscape. The dense foliage makes it difficult to ascertain what might remain from Stringfellow's era, but certainly some portions of the thickets are vestiges of the hedgerows that he installed extensively throughout his orchards to protect his tender fruit trees from the often-brisk coastal breezes.

The house itself sits near the very center of the property. Constructed in 1883 by Galveston County resident George M. Volk, it is the second oldest house still standing in Hitchcock. A large, front-gabled, wood frame barn (contributing) is located about 75 yards northwest of the house and dates from the Stringfellow era. Two additional wood frame storage buildings (noncontributing) are located within closer proximity to the house—one between the house and barn and one to the northeast of the house.

Main House

The house at Stringfellow Orchards is a 1.5-story, wood frame, folk Victorian residence with Queen Anne form and spindlework detailing. The irregular, front-facing L plan is composed of a cross-gabled central mass and hipped ell, all covered in composition shingles. It sits on a pier and beam foundation and is clad in painted cypress lap siding with cypress trim. Most windows are paired, wood, tall, two-over-two, and double-hung in

composition. Those on the north and west elevations have louvered shutters. To take advantage of cooling coastal breezes, the house's main elevation faces south.

The south elevation provides a full view of the central mass' steeply pitched side gable roof, pierced by the cross gabled projection. The projection is slight—not even a full room unit in depth. The gable wall—which holds a small window—is clad in diamond-shaped wood shingles, punctuated by cornice returns, and decorated with a spindlework vergeboard. A gabled dormer also appears on the south elevation. It features return cornice detailing and diamond shingle wall coverings. Its two four-over-four, double-hung, wood windows are framed by slender, classical pilasters. A classic wrap-around porch extends the full length of the main block and wraps partially around the west elevation. Tall, slender, turned spindles and carved brackets support the porch's flat roof. A thin, scalloped wood trim lines the fascia. The porch railing is a simple, low height, recent replacement consisting of square-cut balusters. The centrally-located front entry consists of a pair of paneled doors, still secured by a full mortised lock mechanism. The bottom panels are square, while the taller top panels have a rounded top edge. Narrow, half-glazed sidelights and glazed transom surround the doors.

The ell extends eastward from the rear of the main block. An integrated porch stretches almost the full length of the southern elevation. The detailing on this porch is more elaborate than that on the main block. The low railing is composed of turned spindles, while the decorative brackets support a complex pattern of spindle work that forms a frieze suspended from the fascia. It is unknown if this detailing ever graced the larger front porch as well. Three doors open into the house from this porch and there is a single and a pair of two-over-two double hung windows. The east elevation of the ell contains two small two-over-two windows of varying size, at least one of which shows evidence of a resized replacement.

The north elevation is long, with no projecting bays, and a small integrated porch just west of center. There are three tall, two-over two windows east of the porch and one west of the porch. The porch supports and decorative brackets on this elevation are of a different design than those on the south elevations. The columns are square rather than turned, and the brackets are a much simpler design. Two doors open from the porch into the house. Two gable-front dormers project from the roof. The gable end and side walls are clad in plain wood shingles. Each features a pair of two-over-two windows.

The large gable end of the main block is evident on the west elevation. It features spindlework ornamentation at the gable peak, but does not have shingled wall coverings like the gables on the other elevations. A pair of four-over-four windows is set into the gable end wall. At the first floor ceiling height, a shallow pent roof runs from the north. It terminates about halfway across the elevation; the roof of the wrap-around porch continues the general line. Two two-over two windows are placed below the pent roof. Under the porch are three additional windows—two are two-over-two, and the third has a multi-paned lower sash.

The first floor of the main block contains a small entry hall and four roughly square rooms of varying sizes. The ell holds an additional two rooms. The upstairs is divided into two small and one large bedrooms. Original wood floors and trim exists throughout the house. Of note are the extra-tall mopboard and ornate door and window surrounds. Many of the four-paneled, interior doors are original and are topped by large glazed transoms. Because the home is currently undergoing rehabilitation, the interior horizontal-board walls and ceilings are exposed. The half-turn stairs are located in the west half of the entry hall and feature a unique octagonal newel post and turned balusters. The original fireplace mantle and trim are no longer extant.

There is very little documentation to provide evidence of the changes the house might have undergone over time. Close examination of the construction materials in the rooms that abut the rear porch suggest that they once were open porch space. A similar investigation reveals that the kitchen (at the end of the ell) may have been an addition made by the Kipfer family in the early twentieth century that provided them with an additional workspace for processing their harvests. Details that suggest this addition include the lesser-grade construction materials used in the kitchen, as well as the hipped roof of the ell, and the small enclosed space (retrofitted by the current owner as a bathroom) on the east end of the side porch. The difference in spindlework details used on the house's three porches is also undocumented, and it is unknown which, if any, represent the original detail work. Nonetheless, the house retains the characteristic features of the Queen Anne style—irregular, cross gabled, asymmetrical form; one-story wrap-around porch; and gable end decorations such as spindlework and patterned wall shingles. It also retains integrity of materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Barn, c. 1890, contributing
The barn measures 52' x 42'. The front (south) elevation is clad in board and batten siding, weathered and unpainted. 1' x 12' boards are captured by 1" x 4" cypress battens. Some of the battens are now missing. The remaining exterior walls are sheathed in corrugated tin. The most notable feature of the barn is the broad gable roof which extends very low. A wide opening in the center of the gable end permitted passage for wagons; smaller openings on either side gave access to the stock pens. The doors for these three openings are no longer extant. A simple board door covers the hay loft opening directly under the gable peak. The roof is now covered in tin, but was likely originally shingled.

Inside, the interior animal stalls are arranged on either side of the large central space which runs parallel to the roof ridge. Above the central pen is the hayloft, accessible via interior stairs. Large-diameter roughhewn poles provide support for the floor, and many of them extend from floor to ceiling, providing support for the roof. Joists are made from rough-sawn 2" x 8" x 20' pine boards. The loft floor is random width 1" tongue and groove pine.

The barn has not been in active use for many years. As a result, there is some deterioration of elements, particularly the exterior siding and the interior stalls. The initial date of construction is difficult to determine. The Kipfer family, who lived on the property from 1920 to 2005, maintains that it dates from the Stringfellow era. Deed records show that when Stringfellow sold the property to E.J. Biering in 1894, he also sold him all of the improvements on the property, along with farm implements. It is reasonable to conclude this included the barn. Local tradition holds that the property escaped heavy damage during the destructive 1900 hurricane due to the extensive installations of hedgerows that served to protect the orchards from high winds. The barn's historic form is still remarkably intact and conveys a sense of its historic function despite the deterioration. It would have played an integral role in the agricultural operations during the period of significance.

Sheds (2), c. 1940s, noncontributing
Located between the barn and the house is a small wood shed measuring approximately 18'x 24'. Another small wood shed is located just northeast of the house. The Kipfer family erected these utilitarian sheds in the 1940s to accommodate storage and processing needs for their farm. The sheds are minor in scale, devoid of architectural value, post-date the period of significance, and do not contribute to the overall significance of the property.

Statement of Significance

Henry Martyn Stringfellow, an influential early Texas horticulturalist, established his well-known orchard in Hitchcock in 1883. Though he began his career in nearby Galveston nearly twenty years earlier, it was here that he solidified his reputation as a pioneering authority on pears. His productivity in Hitchcock coincided with and influenced the emergence of a thriving agricultural economy in Hitchcock. He sold his thirty-acre orchard after just ten years, but in 1920 the Kipfer family once again used the property to sustain an agricultural enterprise. They successfully made a living on the property by operating a truck farm and flower shop until 1989. Stringfellow Orchards is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A for its association with agriculture and under Criterion C for architecture, both at the local level of significance.

Hitchcock, Galveston County, Texas

Galveston County is comprised of approximately 400 square miles of land—a combination of mainland and barrier islands—on the upper Texas coast. The area is generally flat, with the highest altitude reaching only thirty-five feet above sea level. The mainland coastline is indented with small bays, inlets, and marshes. The climate is subtropical, and the area usually sees about forty-seven inches of rainfall annually. The growing season lasts for 320 days a year. The county's economy historically derives from its location as an important transportation hub on the Gulf of Mexico. In the mid- and late nineteenth century, the city of Galveston was a thriving deep water port city, importing and exporting goods and welcoming thousands of immigrants from all over the world. In 1873, the Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe Railway began construction and soon connected the port city to the rest of the country. In 1880, Galveston was the largest city in Texas.[1]

Hitchcock is located on the county's mainland, fourteen miles northwest of the city of Galveston. A few settlers called the area home in the late 1840s and engaged in cattle ranching. The small settlement was originally known as Highland because of its location on Highland Bayou. The bayou provided convenient transportation to the bustling city of Galveston. In 1873, the Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe Railway began laying track from Galveston to connect with lines to the north. The Hitchcock family allowed the railway the right-of-way through their land in Highland and donated land for a townsite. Thus, the first railroad way station out of Galveston was renamed Hitchcock. The community maintained a population of a couple hundred through the remainder of the nineteenth century. With the railroad opening up new transportation options, Hitchcock became an active fruit and vegetable growing region and shipping center.[2] George Henckel began the first shipping business and by the early 1900s there were seven packing houses and two cooper shops.[3] Through the first two decades of the twentieth century, truck farming was the predominant industry on the Galveston County mainland. A prominent player in this thriving local agricultural activity was Henry Martyn Stringfellow, a successful horticulturalist who relocated to Hitchcock from Galveston in 1883.

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[1] Diana J. Kleiner, "GALVESTON COUNTY," *Handbook of Texas Online* (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hcg02), accessed August 16, 2012. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

[2] Diana J. Kleiner, "HITCHCOCK, TX," *Handbook of Texas Online* (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hfh06), accessed August 16, 2012. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

[3] "Hitchcock," Official Texas Historical Marker file, Texas Historical Commission.

Henry Martyn Stringfellow

Henry Martyn Stringfellow was born on January 21, 1839, in Winchester, Virginia, to Reverend Horace Stringfellow and his wife, Harriet Louisa Strother Stringfellow, an accomplished artist. Stringfellow received a classical education in arts and sciences. He graduated from William and Mary College, and later from the Virginia Theological Seminary, with honors. All the male members of his family that came before him were Episcopal ministers or lawyers, but Stringfellow chose not to be ordained. He then studied law at his father's request. He graduated from law school but never practiced.[4]

In 1861, at the beginning of the Civil War, Stringfellow enlisted as a private in the Confederate Army, and participated in the Battles of Yorktown and Richmond. Later, Stringfellow journeyed south to Galveston with Major General John B. Macgruder to help expel Union forces there. After the Battle of Galveston, Private Stringfellow advanced in rank to Captain and was placed in charge of the ordnance department in Houston, which is where he met Miss Alice Johnston, a daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Joseph R. Johnston, natives of North Carolina, but living in south Texas at the time. Henry and Alice were married on December 15, 1863, and the young couple lived in various south Texas towns, finally settling in Galveston in 1865. Their only son, Leslie, was born a year later. Though he had graduate degrees in both theology and law, Stringfellow chose instead to earn a living by selling insurance and real estate, and even tried his hand as a cotton broker. By his own account, these ventures were not successful.[5]

In April 1866, however, a chance encounter while enjoying a casual day of fishing would change Stringfellow's life forever. While fishing from a Galveston wharf, Stringfellow met a man who related stories of his youth spent on the Rhine in Germany where the industry was growing grapes. He also elaborated on how he had erred and left his homeland seeking excitement and what proved to be an elusive fortune in America, missing making that fortune in growing grapes. Stringfellow was so influenced by the man's enthusiasm that on his way home he went to the bookstore and purchased the only two books available on the subject.[6]

Stringfellow soon became completely infatuated with horticulture, and by May 1868, he began experimenting seriously with fruits and vegetables on a two-and-a-half-acre plot of land at 45th Street and Avenue N (he resided not far away on Avenue W). The plot soon grew to five acres.[7] His first crops were cabbage and melons, and he began experiments to test which type and amounts of manure were best to use as fertilizer.[8] He had a small orange grove and a vineyard, which was sheltered by a windbreak of salt cedar and oleander. By 1870 he had added 600 grape vines, of twenty-one mostly European varieties, experimenting to see which would do best in Galveston. News of these experiments reached as far as New York.[9] Stringfellow writes that he was one of only a few market-gardeners on Galveston Island at the time, and though he tried to learn what he could from them, they were not willing to share their knowledge. Thus, he gained much of his knowledge by experiment and came to love the process. He also credited the 1867 publication *Gardening for Profit: A Guide*

[4] Stephen Chism, *The Afterlife of Leslie Stringfellow* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2005), 14-18.
[5] Stephen Chism, *The Afterlife of Leslie Stringfellow* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2005), 14-18.
[6] H.M. Stringfellow, *The New Horticulture* (Galveston, 1896), 13-15.
[7] H.M. Stringfellow, *The New Horticulture* (Galveston, 1896), 16-17.
[8] H.M. Stringfellow, *The New Horticulture* (Galveston, 1896), 24.
[9] Samuel Wood Geiser, *Horticulture & Horticulturalists in Early Texas* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University, 1945), 84.

to the Successful Cultivation of the Market and Family Garden by Peter Henderson.[10] Stringfellow found much success in horticultural enterprises and made a good living selling the fruits of his labor to local dealers and restaurants. In 1875, he was sure his land had "played out," but then he was offered tons of free gunpowder that had gotten wet and could no longer be used for ordnance. After applying it heavily to his entire acreage and getting a hugely successful crop, he discovered that potash (high potassium) was a highly effective fertilizer ingredient and advocated its use for the rest of his life.[11]

Stringfellow was so successful that he soon outgrew his five-acre plot on Galveston Island. He sought land on the mainland of Galveston County where he could expand upon his horticultural experiments. In addition to needing more room, the move may also have been prompted by a succession of storms that inundated the island with tidal surges. In 1883, Stringfellow moved his family to Hitchcock, across Galveston Bay, sixteen miles northwest of Galveston. He acquired thirty acres along the banks of Highland Bayou. Here he built his home and started "Stringfellow Orchards," a famous pear orchard which became the showplace of the Coast Country.[12]

Stringfellow Orchards, Hitchcock, 1883-1893

Over the course of the next decade, Stringfellow escalated his experiments in scope and size, earning recognition from horticulturalists across the country. It was on this orchard that he gained the knowledge that formed the basis for the two widely-circulated publications for which he is best known: *How to Grow Fruits and Vegetables in the Coast Country and What Varieties to Grow: A Practical Treatise* (1890) and *The New Horticulture* (1896). Stringfellow grew and experimented with a variety of fruits and vegetables, but he was most well-known for his pear and orange production. In addition to conducting experiments and reporting the outcomes, Stringfellow earned income by selling the produce, and by propagating and selling young trees and cuttings.

In addition to his two primary publications, Stringfellow wrote dozens of articles in *Texas Farm and Ranch*, and for the *Galveston Daily News* and the *Dallas Morning News* on topics as diverse as grape culture, pears, cauliflowers, sweet potatoes, fertilizer, root pruning, planting trees, and marketing fruit. He contributed frequent reports to the U.S. Department of Agriculture on the state of horticulture in coastal Texas, and was a consistent presenter at the annual Texas State Horticultural Society's meetings and at the annual Texas Farmers' Congress. Stringfellow won a silver medal for his peaches at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in 1904. In the 1929 *Standard Cyclopedia of Horticulture*, Stringfellow is listed among the eight pioneers who had done the most to advance the field of Texas horticulture.

Stringfellow placed special emphasis on the growing of pear trees, and his pear trees reached heights of 20-24 feet. He sold pear trees by the hundred or by the 1,000 tree lots. His orchards boasted 2,000 bearing pear trees at the height of its operation. In his *The New Horticulture*, he describes growing ten acres of Garber and ten acres of LeConte pears. The plots were bisected each way by cottonwood trees, thus cutting each ten acre lot

[10] H.M. Stringfellow, *The New Horticulture* (Galveston, 1896), 16-17.
[11] H.M. Stringfellow, *The New Horticulture* (Galveston, 1896), 27-28.
[12] Dorothy Peterson, Application for Official Texas Historical Marker, Stringfellow Orchards, 1992. On file at the Texas Historical Commission, Austin, TX.

into four blocks of two and a half acres.[13] The cottonwoods acted as a windbreak against the near constant, often high velocity coastal breezes. Hedgerows of more than three hundred cape jasmine (a type of gardenia) and wild white rose around the perimeter of the property served the same purpose.[14]

Stringfellow's success with pears is what he is most known for, but he also grew and experimented with a variety of fruits in his orchard. In 1884, Stringfellow sent to Japan for young Satsuma orange trees, and had the first Galveston County orange grove on his property in Hitchcock. The Satsuma, which is a popular citrus fruit prized for its thin peel that is easy to remove, did well for him for a period of time and he reported favorably on its progress in the *Galveston Daily News* and *Texas Farm and Ranch* for several years. Concerned about its susceptibility to freezes, however, he cautioned his readers not to invest heavily in the crop until he had observed his trees' performance during a harsh winter. In 1895, after a hard freeze killed most of the trees, he concluded that "it was useless to try further."[15]

Stringfellow regularly reported on the success and failures of various crops and methodologies. The newspapers also contain letters from people all over the country reporting on how well his advice worked for them. Often they wrote in exclaiming success and praising Stringfellow for his expertise. Occasionally, though, he was taken to task by someone who did not see good results or who questioned his conclusions. Horticultural books and journals of the time show that not all horticulturalists were in agreement about whether Stringfellow's methods could be widely adapted. Some felt that the unique environment of the coastal country had more to do with Stringfellow's success than did his methodologies. Despite their usefulness in other locales, the harvest reports in the *Galveston Daily News* and *Dallas Morning News* prove that Stringfellow enjoyed healthy harvest rates.

Reporters, horticultural societies, and others regularly visited the Stringfellow Orchards to witness him in action. Stringfellow welcomed them openly. He explained that he felt it was his duty to share with everyone what he learned during his experiments. What took him years to learn could be taught to others in mere minutes, and that's the reason he opened up his orchard to visitors and published his findings widely.[16]

Henry Stringfellow's experience at Stringfellow Orchards in Hitchcock led him to advocate for methods of cultivation that were radically different from what was established practice at the time. He widely published these new ideas in Texas *Farm and Ranch*, the *Galveston Daily News*, and other horticultural journals. They became the basis for 1896's *The New Horticulture*. He was an advocate for a method of root pruning known as close-root pruning, which basically consisted of cutting all the roots of a seedling to shorter than one-inch before planting it. The accepted practice at the time was to leave as much root as possible when planting. He also advocated for very little soil cultivation between the planted rows, opting instead to allow for natural grass growth.

Indeed, Stringfellow was instrumental in establishing a robust, though short-lived, pear industry in Texas. In 1890, the agricultural census reported 37,000 bearing pear trees in Texas. Ten years later, that number had skyrocketed to over one million bearing pear trees—more than a third of them were in Galveston County. The

[13] Stringfellow, *The New Horticulture*, 102.
[14] Chism, 55.
[15] *Galveston Daily News*, December 9, 1889; July 29, 1892; January 7, 1894; August 17, 1895; and November 10, 1895.
[16] *Galveston Daily News* January 27, 1893.

September 27, 1896, issue of the *Dallas Morning News* ran a feature article about Stringfellow titled "The Pioneer Pear Man: H.M. Stringfellow and His Pioneer Pear Orchard." In it, they proclaim that "Mr. Stringfellow has probably devoted more time, study and money to the subject of pears than any other man in Texas." The article goes on to explain that Hitchcock shipped more fruit and vegetables (except strawberries) than any other stop along the Gulf, Colorado, and Santa Fe. According to the reporter, that success was a direct result of Stringfellow developing the locals' interest in the fruit industry. In the reporter's estimation, the town of Hitchcock "didn't amount to much" until Stringfellow moved in. Then, "Hitchcock has [grown] into a prosperous town backed up by an active enterprising rural population." Unfortunately, the pear industry could not be sustained, as horticulturalists were unable to successfully combat the destructive pear blight.[17]

Local African Americans were included in this "enterprising rural population." During this time, black workers in the Hitchcock community earned three dollars per week or fifty cents per day. At the peak of business, Stringfellow paid thirty black workers at his orchard one dollar a day. Other landowners accused Stringfellow of driving up labor costs because of his dollar a day wage.[18] The additional income had an economic impact on the African-American community that is still evident today. For example, because of the higher wages paid to the black workers, they were able to purchase land, build houses, schools, and churches in their own communities. This included the 1867 Settlement where Stringfellow employee Frank Bell, Sr. lived. Bell family descendants still own property in the Settlement Historic District that was purchased from money earned at Stringfellow Orchards.

Stringfellow was not the only successful horticulturalist in the area, nor was his operation the largest. Because he published articles so frequently, and because he was so active in the various trade associations, he was one of the most well-known. In addition to Stringfellow, many people in Galveston County were active in horticultural pursuits during the late nineteenth century. Among them were John M. Claiborne, Edward H. Cushing, Walter Sparkman Deats, William Jefferson Jones, Sidney Scudder, and Philip Crosby Tucker, Jr.[19] These men were all active in the important formative years of the Texas horticultural industry. Though commercial horticultural pursuits in Texas predate the Texas Revolution, it didn't gain momentum until after the Civil War's end. When the pioneering journal *Texas Farm and Ranch* was established in 1883 (the same year Stringfellow Orchards was established), horticulture activity in the state already justified inclusion of a dedicated "horticultural page." The Texas State Pomological and Horticultural Society (known interchangeably as the Texas State Horticultural Society) was established in 1875; at least five regional societies were already in existence, including the Galveston Horticultural Society which was formed in 1870.[20] Stringfellow's most productive years coincide with this period when Texas horticulturalists were organizing and professionalizing.

In late 1894 Stringfellow sold the orchard and moved back to Galveston due to failing health. He continued to publish articles containing guidance for the cultivation of all types of plants in the coastal country, but it is unclear how actively he was engaged in the practice himself during this period. In 1897, the Stringfellows' adopted a baby girl, naming her Lessie in remembrance of their son, Leslie, who had died in 1886. Wishing to

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[17] Sam H. Dixon, *ABC of Fruit Growing: Being a Guide to the Beginner in Fruit Growing* (Austin: Texas Department of Agriculture, 1913), 84.

[18] Historic Marker File, Stringfellow Orchards. On file at the Texas Historical Commission.

[19] See entries in Samuel Wood Geiser, *Horticulture & Horticulturalists in Early Texas* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1945).

[20] Geiser, 21-26.

try experiments with nut trees, the Stringfellows moved to Lampasas, Texas, in 1900. He continued his horticultural experiments there until 1911. The Stringfellow family then moved to Fayetteville, Arkansas, so Henry could pursue experimenting with grafting the English walnut on the native walnut. H.M. Stringfellow continued to advance the practice of horticulture until his death on June 17, 1912.[21]

After Stringfellow Orchards[22]

An early Hitchcock settler and Stringfellow neighbor E. J. Biering bought the property from Stringfellow and continued to operate it as an orchard for several years. It then passed to the Tacquard family. Its use during this time period is unknown. Albert and Myrtle Kipfer, of Kansas, bought the property in February 1920, hoping to escape the cold Midwest winters. The couple, with help from their children, Clara, John and Alice, started a farm. Sometimes they sold eggs, butter, and other farm products as they were available. They quickly were able to produce enough to start truck farming, and shipped their produce to local and distant markets. Eventually, they also grew and sold cut flowers, which they would harvest each morning. Clara Kipfer opened a flower shop on the property along FM 519 called Hi-Way Bi-Way Flower Shop in 1938 and operated it until 1989. The expansive and beautiful grounds, located in the city's center, frequently served as a community meeting space for events such as the Hitchcock Union Church's annual picnic, the Modern Woodmen of the World gatherings, and Boy Scout campouts. It was also a favorite gathering spot for local children, who played baseball, volleyball, and horseshoes on the lawn. Over time, the Kipfers slowly sold small parcels of the original 30 acres. The current owner bought the remaining 9.42 acres in 2005.

Significance under Criteria A and C

Stringfellow Orchards is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of agriculture. The orchards were established in the late nineteenth century by a pioneering horticulturalist and played an important role in the community's early transition from a ranching economy to one based heavily on growing fruits and vegetables for market. The period of significance (1883–1894) corresponds with horticulturist H.M. Stringfellow's important agricultural activity on the property. The property is also nominated at the local level of significance under Criterion C in the area of architecture. The Stringfellow House is a good local example of the vernacular Queen Anne style, even with the minor modifications to porch configurations and decorative details. It possesses a good degree of integrity in the areas of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, association, and location. The property's historic acreage has been reduced by nearly two-thirds, and modern development now surrounds the remaining tract. Thus, there is an impact on the integrity of setting, but it is of minor importance and the property still readily conveys its agricultural associations and architectural significance.

[21] "Stringfellow Orchards," Official Texas Historical Marker file. Texas Historical Commission.

[22] Sources for this section include: "Local family celebrates 70 years in Hitchcock," *The Bulletin*, February 21, 1990; "The Stringfellow Place," *Galveston Daily News*, February 24, 1989; various undated news clippings contained in the Kipfer family scrapbook; "Stringfellow Orchards," Official Texas Historical Marker file. Texas Historical Commission.

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Kleiner, Diana J. "Hitchcock, Texas." *Handbook of Texas Online*. (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hfh06), accessed August 16, 2012. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

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"Stringfellow Orchards." Official Texas Historical Marker file. Texas Historical Commission.

Texas Farm and Ranch.

Verbal Boundary Description:

Being a 9.4214 acre tract or parcel of land, being the unsold portion of the land known as the H. M. Stringfellow Pear Orchard in the W. H. Jack League, Abstract No. 13, in Galveston County, Texas, and being the same tract or parcel of land described in deed dated March 24, 1966 from Myrtle Kipfer to John H. Kipfer, Clara Catherine Kipfer, and Alice Kipfer Schoeffler, recorded in Volume 1765, Page 697, less SAVE AND EXCEPT, however, any other portions thereto since conveyed, specifically including but not limited to, those described in Volume 2241, Page 409, and in Volume 2595, Page 4098, both of the Deed Records, and under Clerk's File Number 9232095, of the Real Property Records, all in Galveston County, Texas, this description being given for general purposes of location, only.

BEGINNING at a fence post in the Southeast corner of said Lot 1, of Bayou Ridge Subdivision, as recorded in Volume 3, Page 29, of the Map Records of Galveston County, Texas;

THENCE South 17 deg 49 min 57 sec West, along F.M. 519 (80' R.O.W.), a distance of 466.90 feet to a 1/2 inch iron rod set for corner;

THENCE North 70 deg 25 min 13 sec West, a distance of 150.00 feet to a 1/2 inch iron set for corner;

THENCE North 70 deg 51 min 37 sec West, a distance of 147.77 feet to a 1/2 inch iron rod set for corner;

THENCE South 19 deg 08 min 00 sec West, a distance of 50.00 feet to a 1/2 inch iron rod set for corner;

THENCE North 70 deg 52 min 00 sec West, a distance of 100.00 feet to a 1/2 inch iron pipe found for corner;

THENCE South 19 deg 08 min 00 sec West, a distance of 100.00 feet to a 1/2 inch iron rod set for corner on the North right of way line of State Highway 6 (Variable Width R.O. W.);

THENCE North 71 deg 23 min 08 sec West, along the North right of way line of State Highway 6, a distance of 73.68 feet to a 1/2 inch iron rod set for corner;

THENCE North 14 dèg 51 min 00 sec East, a distance of 100.00 feet to a 4 inch axle found for corner;

THENCE North 70 deg 44 min 00 sec West, a distance of 190.00 feet to a 1/2 inch iron rod set for corner;

THENCE South 14 deg 51 min 00 sec West, a distance of 100.00 feet to a 1 inch iron pipe found for corner;

THENCE North 70 deg 44 min 00 sec West, a distance of 15.00 feet to a 1/2 inch iron rod set for corner;

THENCE North 14 deg 46 min 04 sec East, a distance of 98.47 feet lo a 1/2 inch iron rod set for corner;

THENCE North 70 deg 44 min 00 sec West, a distance of 133.00 feet to a 1/2 inch iron pipe found for corner;

THENCE North 14 deg 46 min 04 sec East. a dis lance of 199.36 feet to a angle iron found for corner;

THENCE South 75 deg 13 min 56 sec East, a distance of 133.00 feet to a 1/2 inch iron rod set for corner;

THENCE North 14 deg 46 min 04 sec East, a distance of 100.00 feet to a 1/2 inch iron rod set for corner;

THENCE North 75 deg 13 min 56 sec West, a distance of 133.00 feet to an angle iron found for corner;

THENCE North 14 deg 02 min II sec East, a dis lance of 206.37 feet to a 1/2 inch iron rod set for corner;

THENCE South 75 deg 24 min 52 sec East, a distance of 133.00 feet to a fence post for corner;

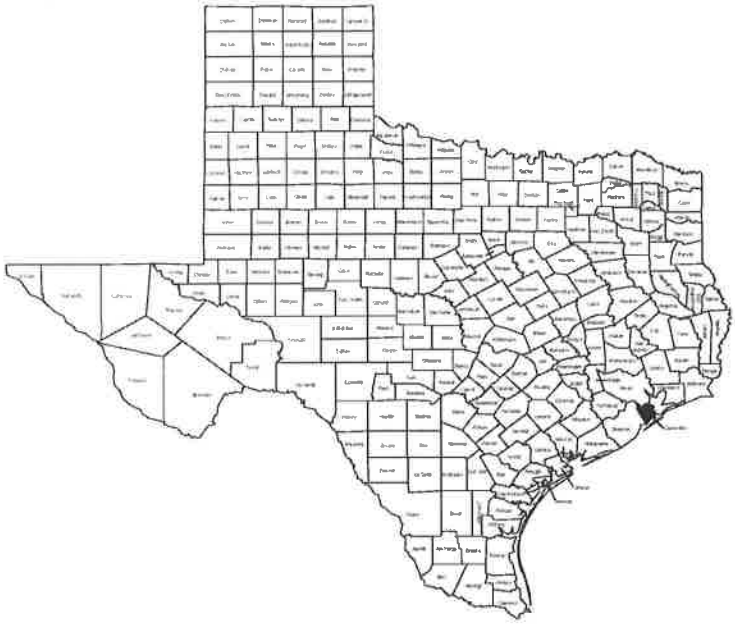
THENCE South 74 deg 51 min 16 sec East, a distance of 60.71 feet to an 1/2 inch iron rod found for corner point being the Southwest corner of Lot 9, of Bayou Ridge Subdivision;

THENCE South 70 deg 44 min 00 sec East, along the South line of Bayou Ridge Subdivision, a distance of 654.32 feet to the POINT OF BEGINNING 01 the herein described tract.

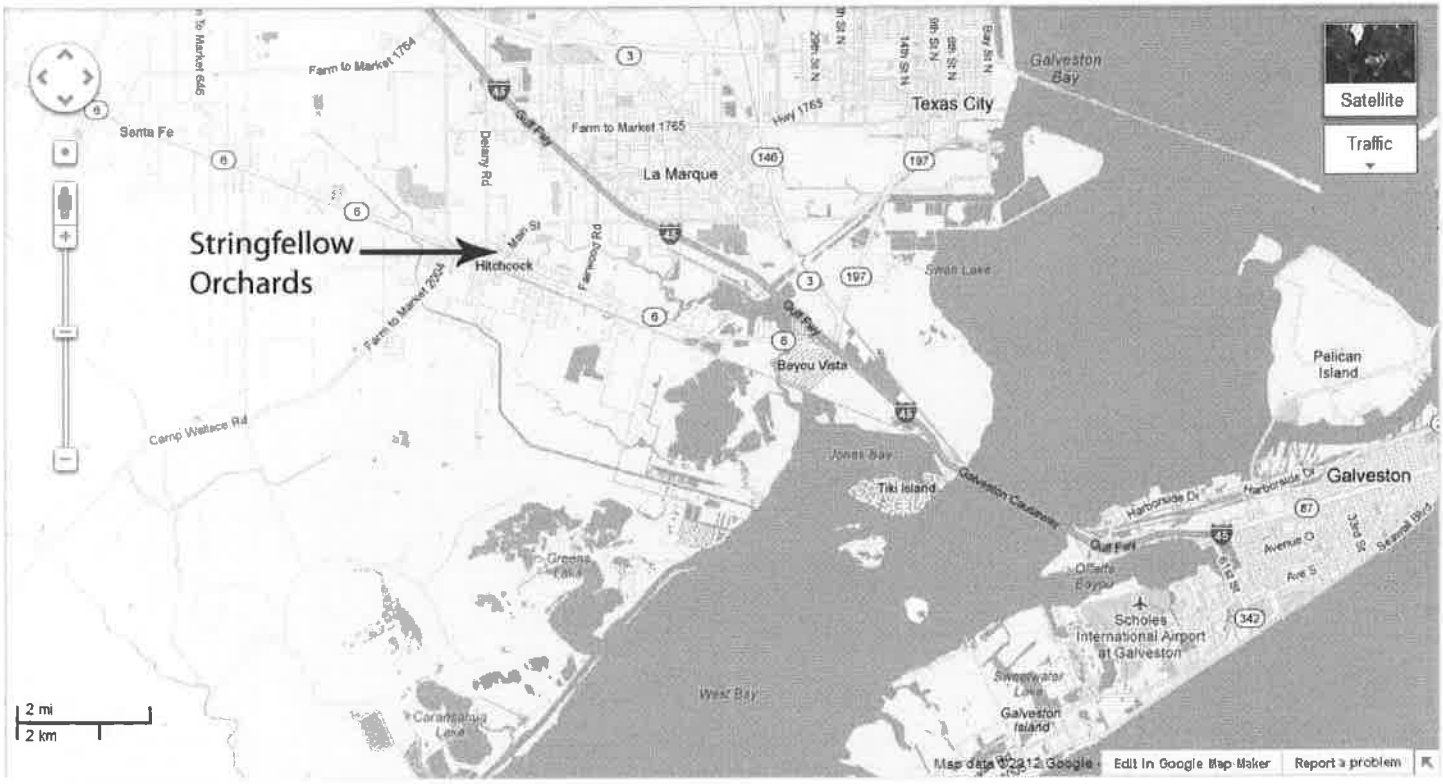
Boundary Justification:

This boundary includes all remaining property that once comprised the historic Stringfellow Orchards.

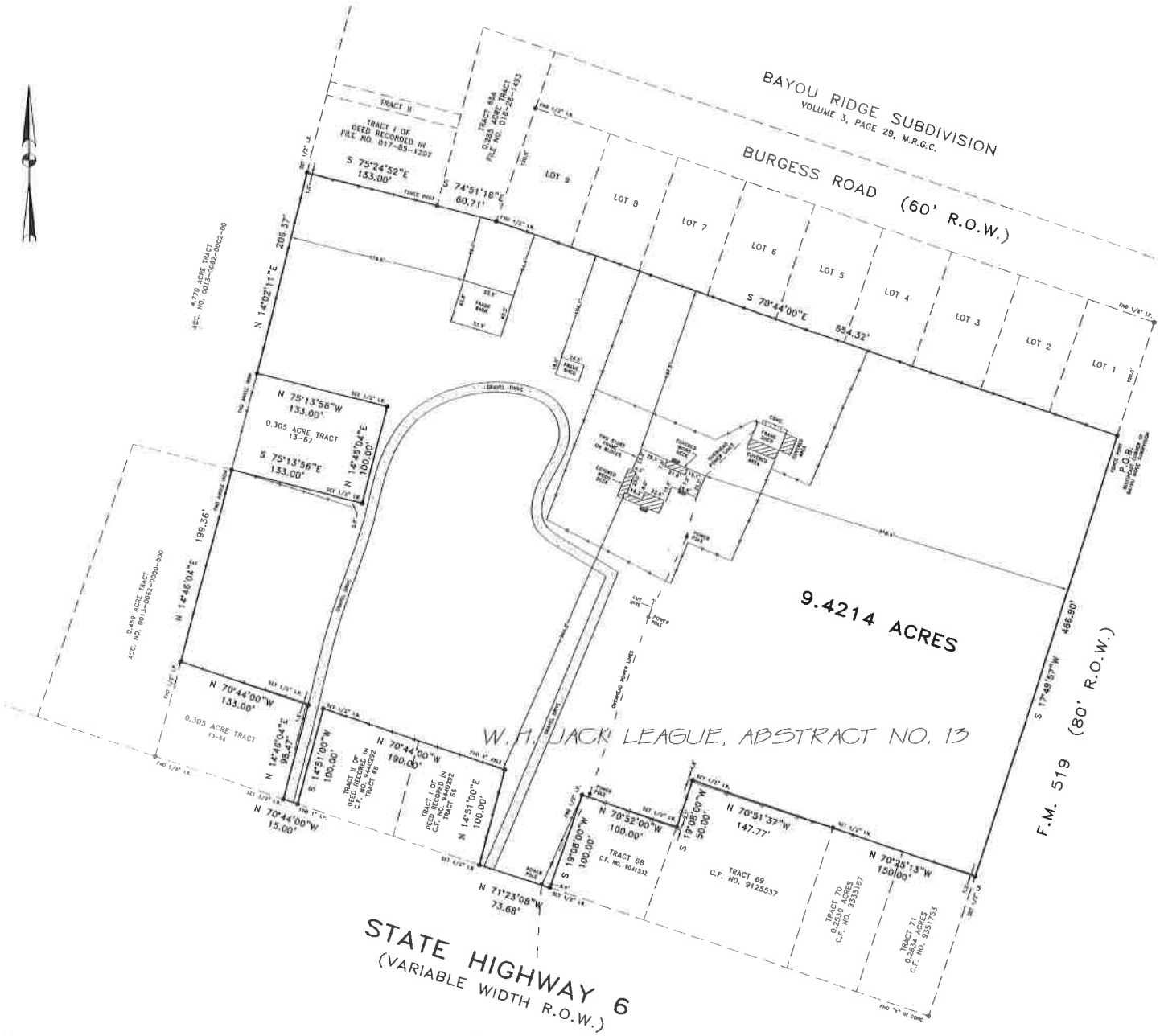
Map 1: Galveston County (shaded) is located on the upper Texas coast.



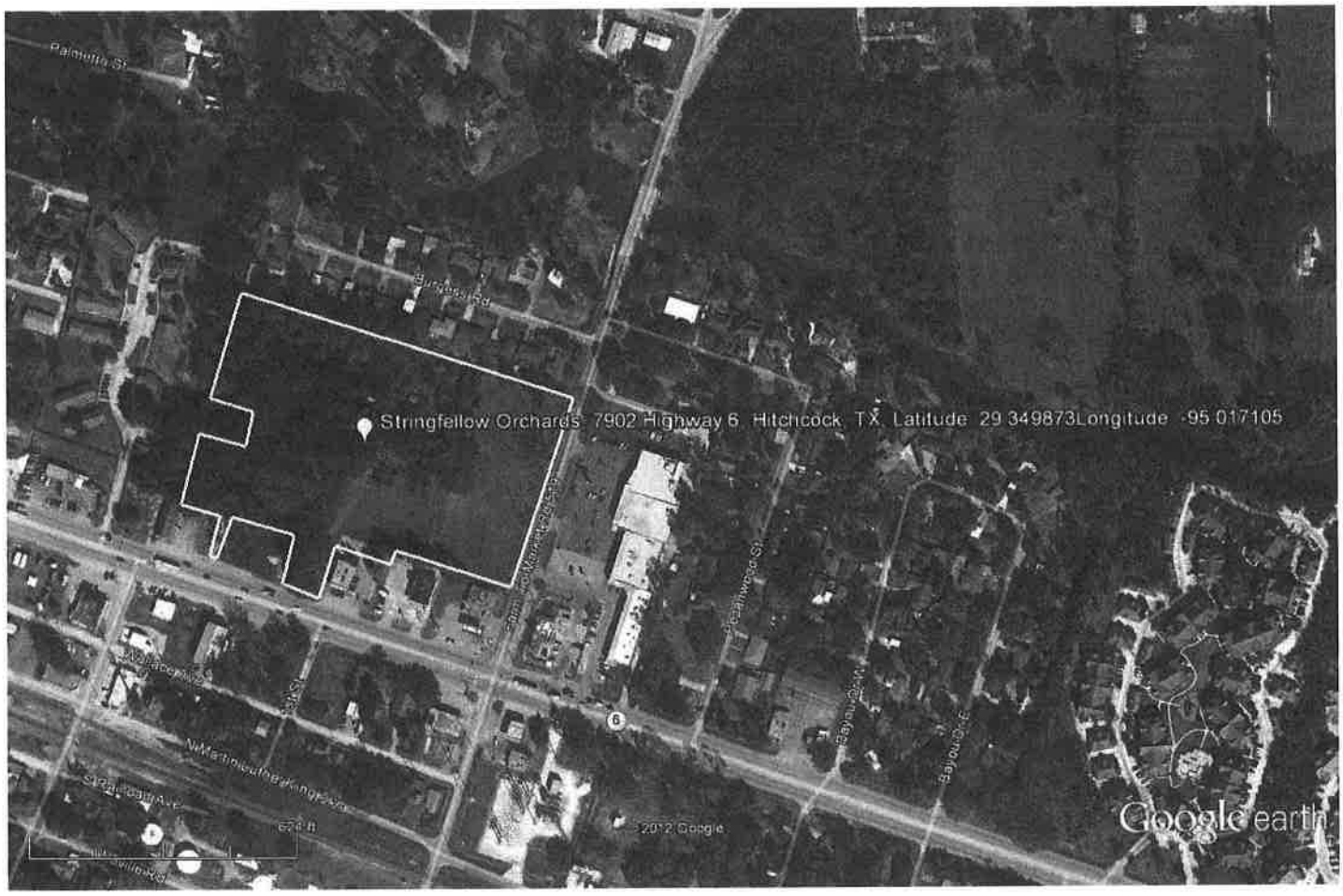
Map 2: Stringfellow Orchards is located at the intersection of Highway 6 and F.M. 519 in Hitchcock.



Map 3: 2005 survey depicting property lines, which also serve as the boundary for the nomination.



Map 4: Google Earth map depicting the approximate boundary lines and the latitude/longitude coordinates for the nominated property.



Google earth feet 1000 meters 400

Figure 1: This sketch of Henry Stringfellow accompanied a September 1896 *Dallas Morning News* article that featured Stringfellow's successful pear orchards and his impact on the community of Hitchcock.

H. M. STRINGFELLOW,
The Pioneer Pear Grower of the Coast Country.

Figure 2: The orchard in early 1894. Rosenberg Library, Texas History Center, Accession # AW-69.

Figure 3: H.M. Stringfellow's 1890 publication *How to Grow Fruits and Vegetables in the Coast County and What Varieties to Grow* contains a large number of advertisements extolling the virtues of the Hitchcock area as a profitable fruit and vegetable growing environment. Stringfellow's reputation as a successful horticulturalist meant that his endorsement of a product carried much credibility (see ad top left).

ADVERTISEMENTS.

J. S. BROWN HARDWARE CO.,
STRAND, GALVESTON, TEXAS.
HARDWARE
AND
AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS.
"Send me another Empire Plow; it is the best plow I ever tried."
H. M. STRINGFELLOW.

RICHARD FROTSCHER,
15 and 17 DuMain St., New Orleans, La.
SEEDS OF ALL KINDS
SUITED TO THE SOUTHERN CLIMATE.

J. L. NORMAND, MARKSVILLE, LA.
—SPECIALTY:—
Japanese Fruit Trees and the Oonshiu Orange
The coming Orange for doubtful latitudes. Hardy, bears early, seedless and thornless. Prices low for small or large lots. Also Citrus Trifoliata plants for hedges. This will be the future hedge plant of the country; stands 7° below zero. Send for catalogue.

FOR SALE.
HITCHCOCK OR NUNAN
STRAWBERRY PLANTS
AND
DALLAS BLACKBERRY PLANTS.
APPLY TO JAMES HANCOCK,
HITCHCOCK, TEXAS.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

FOR SALE.
LAND IN LOTS TO SUIT PURCHASERS
LYING IMMEDIATELY AROUND
HIGHLAND
STATION,
GALVESTON COUNTY,
And Also Between
Highland and Hitchcock
DISTANT THREE MILES.
APPLY TO
Amasa Stewart,
DENISON,
OR TEXAS.
S. A. Cook,
GALVESTON,
TEXAS.

Figure 4: Another sampling of advertisements from Stringflellow's 1890 publication.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

FOR SALE.

In lots to suit purchasers, high land lying just north of

HIGHLAND STATION,

Galveston County,

And extending toward

DICKINSON

On both sides of the G., H.& H.R. R.

For Particulars apply to

CHAS. LEAGUE,

Galveston, Texas.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

FOR SALE.

FIVE AND TEN ACRE TRACTS

OF FINE

FRUIT AND VEGETABLE LANDS

Favorably situated, near Hitchcock, Texas, on reasonable terms and prices.

For further information apply to

J. W. WAGNON.

104 East Texas St., Denison, Texas.

RICE, BAULARD & CO.,

MANUFACTURERS OF

READY MIXED PAINTS

Best for Southern Climate.

PAINTS, OILS, WINDOW GLASS, PUTTY, ARTISTIC WALL PAPER, WINDOW SHADES.

GALVESTON, TEXAS.

J. V. WHITE,

DEALER IN

Saddlery, Harness and Carriages

No. 75 Tremont Street,

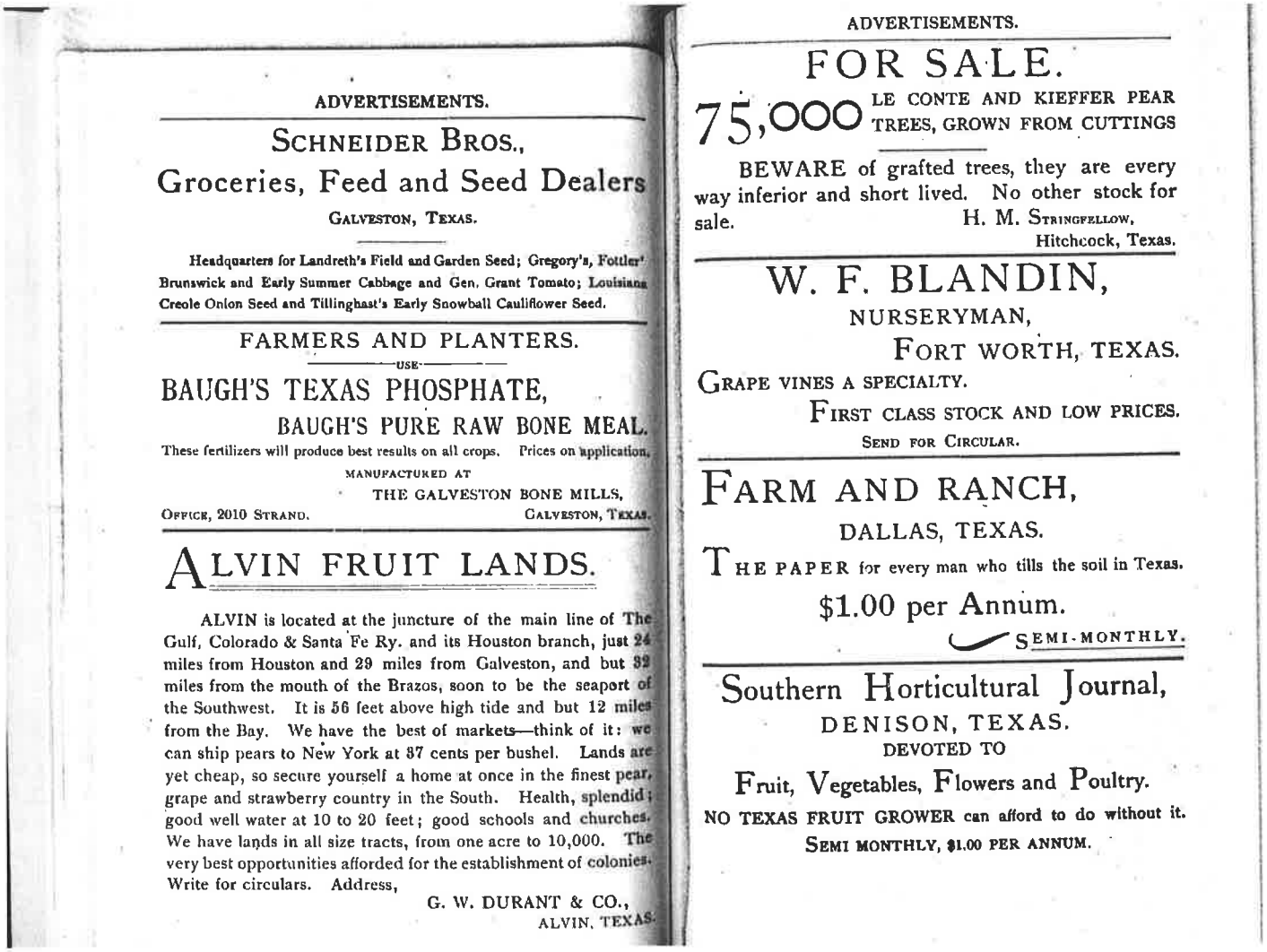
Bet. Strand and Mechanic Sts. GALVESTON, TEXAS.

HITCHCOCK

HITCHCOCK has already gained prominence for the excellence of its fruits, flowers and vegetables, and is destined to become an important suburb of Galveston. It has a good school, a market, stores, fine artesian water and good society. Land and town lots at reasonable prices. Maps furnished on application. The title of the owners is more than 50 years old. It has been passed upon and adjudicated by a decree in their favor, which is as binding as a decree of the Supreme Court of the United States.

Address, C. DART, Galveston, Texas.

Figure 5: Stringfellow also took out an ad in the 1890 publication, selling LeConte and Keiffer pear trees grown on his orchard in Hitchcock. See top right.



ADVERTISEMENTS.

SCHNEIDER BROS.,
Groceries, Feed and Seed Dealers
GALVESTON, TEXAS.

Headquarters for Landreth's Field and Garden Seed; Gregory's, Fottler' Brunswick and Early Summer Cabbage and Gen. Grant Tomato; Louisiana Creole Onion Seed and Tillinghast's Early Snowball Cauliflower Seed.

FARMERS AND PLANTERS.
USE
BAUGH'S TEXAS PHOSPHATE,
BAUGH'S PURE RAW BONE MEAL.
These fertilizers will produce best results on all crops. Prices on application.
MANUFACTURED AT
THE GALVESTON BONE MILLS,
OFFICE, 2010 STRAND. GALVESTON, TEXAS.

ALVIN FRUIT LANDS.

ALVIN is located at the juncture of the main line of The Gulf, Colorado & Santa Fe Ry. and its Houston branch, just 24 miles from Houston and 29 miles from Galveston, and but 32 miles from the mouth of the Brazos, soon to be the seaport of the Southwest. It is 56 feet above high tide and but 12 miles from the Bay. We have the best of markets—think of it: we can ship pears to New York at 37 cents per bushel. Lands are yet cheap, so secure yourself a home at once in the finest pear, grape and strawberry country in the South. Health, splendid; good well water at 10 to 20 feet; good schools and churches. We have lands in all size tracts, from one acre to 10,000. The very best opportunities afforded for the establishment of colonies. Write for circulars. Address,
G. W. DURANT & CO.,
ALVIN, TEXAS.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

FOR SALE.
75,000 LE CONTE AND KIEFFER PEAR TREES, GROWN FROM CUTTINGS

BEWARE of grafted trees, they are every way inferior and short lived. No other stock for sale.
H. M. STRINGFELLOW,
Hitchcock, Texas.

W. F. BLANDIN,
NURSERYMAN,
FORT WORTH, TEXAS.
GRAPE VINES A SPECIALTY.
FIRST CLASS STOCK AND LOW PRICES.
SEND FOR CIRCULAR.

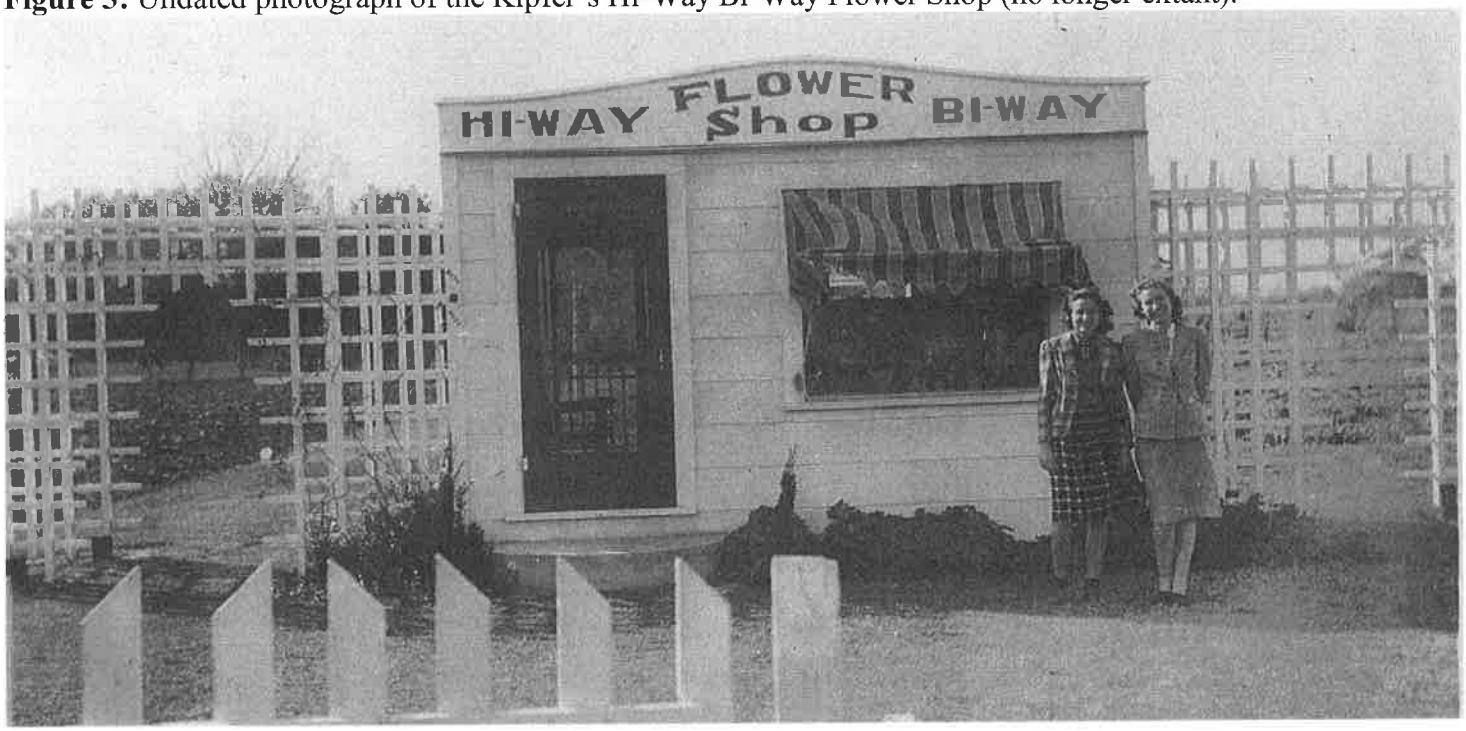
FARM AND RANCH,
DALLAS, TEXAS.
THE PAPER for every man who tills the soil in Texas.
$1.00 per Annum.
SEMI-MONTHLY.

Southern Horticultural Journal,
DENISON, TEXAS.
DEVOTED TO
Fruit, Vegetables, Flowers and Poultry.
NO TEXAS FRUIT GROWER can afford to do without it.
SEMI MONTHLY, $1.00 PER ANNUM.

Figure 6: An undated photograph of the house. Southwest oblique.

Figure 4: Members of the Kipfer family on the north porch, c. 1945.

Figure 5: Undated photograph of the Kipfer's Hi-Way Bi-Way Flower Shop (no longer extant).



Google earth

feet 1000

meters 400

Stringfellow Orchards
7902 Highway 6
Hitchcock, Galveston Co., TX
latitude: 29.349873
longitude: -95.017105

7902

522
5105

TOSHIBA
FedEx
Medium Box
HMS Income Fund

PRIVATE
PROPERTY