

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

New Submission Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

- Native American Occupation and European Settlement to 1812
- Speculation, Slavery and Tobacco: 1813-1860
- War, Recovery and Modern Industrial Beginnings in Rural and Small-Town Rockingham County: 1861-1900
- A Shifting Landscape Beyond the County's Towns: 1901-1929
- Change Comes Slowly in the Countryside and Hamlets: 1930-1953
- Rockingham County Since 1953

C. Form Prepared by

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D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature and title of certifying official _____

Date _____

State or Federal Agency or Tribal government _____

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Signature of the Keeper _____

Date of Action _____

Name of Multiple Property Listing

State

Table of Contents for Written Narrative

Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and the title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

	Page Numbers
E. Statement of Historic Contexts (If more than one historic context is documented, present them in sequential order.)	1-90
F. Associated Property Types (Provide description, significance, and registration requirements.)	91-137
G. Geographical Data	138
H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods (Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.)	139-141
I. Major Bibliographical References (List major written works and primary location of additional documentation: State Historic Preservation Office, other State agency, Federal agency, local government, university, or other, specifying repository.)	142-147

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. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 120 hours per response including the 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 1

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Introduction

From its rugged, rocky, steeply rolling northwest corner to the wide bottomlands along the Dan River and its pastoral undulating terrain in the southeast, Rockingham County is a land of geographical variations. In the mid-1800s, historian John H. Wheeler precisely, if melodramatically, captured this quality:

All the physical features and attributes of Rockingham are in harmony with the rare felicity of its geographical situation. . . . Its majestic hills and smiling valleys unroll to the eye like a panorama of beauty and grandeur and laugh into the harvest of plenty . . . From the bosom of its hills come the sunny streams which irrigate the landscapes and form by the union the majestic rivers whose rushing waters keep music with the roaring wheels and humming spindles.¹

While much has changed in Rockingham County, Wheeler's description remains accurate. Hills still give way to wide, bountiful valleys, ridgelines provide striking views, and the towns still acknowledge the geographic features that brought their prosperity.

The county covers 572 square miles on the northern edge of North Carolina's Piedmont region with Virginia to the north, Stokes County to the west, Caswell County to the east and Guilford County to the south. Rectangular in shape, it is about twenty-nine miles from west to east and roughly twenty miles north to south. The highest elevation (1,022 feet above sea level) occurs at Price in the northwest while the county's lowest point is on the Dan River in the northeast corner. One eighteenth century visitor noted as he passed through the county from east to west that "the face of the country had been becoming more and more uneven, broken and rugged and the eminences had been gradually swelling into higher hills."²

Hardwoods and pine trees interrupted by small irregularly shaped cultivated fields characterize the county's landscape, although increasingly, residential development has converted more and more farmland and woodlands into lawns. The county's most dominant natural feature is the Dan River, which rises in Virginia, crosses neighboring Stokes County and meanders diagonally across Rockingham County from southwest to northeast before returning to Virginia where it joins the Staunton River to form the

¹ John H. Wheeler, *Historical Sketches of North Carolina: 1584-1851* (Baltimore: Regional Publishing Company, 1864).

² John F. D. Smyth, esq., *A Tour in the United States of America*, vol. 1 (London: G. Robinson, J. Robeson and J. Sewell, 1784), 250.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 2

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Roanoke River. William Byrd described the river in 1733 as “about eighty yards wide, always confined within its lofty banks, and rolling down its waters, as sweet as milk, and as clear as crystal.”³ Byrd states that he named the Dan, but for what or whom is not clear.⁴

The Dan’s fertile bottomlands, in some places as much as five miles in width, were the source of much of the county’s wealth historically and they continue to support agriculture today. In 1810, Alexander Sneed, a planter, real estate investor, and promoter of Rockingham County writing in response to a request of the Raleigh *Star* editor for a sketch of the county, described the bottoms as “mostly of a dark Rich mould, mixt with sand, and are well adapted to the culture of Indian corn, &^c and are the most Valuable of any in the county.”⁵ The county’s other major rivers, the Smith, which crosses into the county at nearly the center of its northern border, and the Mayo, which enters the county in the northwest, are both tributaries of the Dan.⁶

The Haw River has its beginning in Forsyth County but curves to the northeast arcing into the southern edge of Rockingham County. Many creeks and streams, such as Wolf Island, Big and Little Troublesome, Upper and Lower Hogans, Lick Fork, Matrimony, Jacobs and Beaver Island, traverse the county. Although the author notes poor drainage along the Haw and along Troublesome and Hogans creeks as well as erosion problems on steep slopes, a 1926 USDA Soil Survey found that “smaller streams and numerous perennial and intermittent branches extend to all parts of the county, giving every farm one or more drainage outlets and effecting complete and thorough drainage of the up lands.”⁷ Like the Dan, the dark, sandy loam of the creek bottomlands advanced agricultural endeavors in the eighteenth, nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries.

³ William Byrd, *The Westover Manuscripts: Containing the History of the Dividing Line Betwixt Virginia and North Carolina; A Journey to the Land of Eden, A.D. 1733; And A Progress to the Mines Written from 1728 to 1736, and Now First Published* (Petersburg, VA: Edmund and Julian Ruffin, 1841), 114. Accessed via <http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/byrd.html>.

⁴ Lindley S. Butler, *Rockingham County: A Brief History* (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1982), 8; William Powell, *The North Carolina Gazetteer* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 134; and *Sketches of the County of Rockingham, NC: Its Topography, Geography, Climate, Soil, and Resources, Agricultural and Mineral* (Leaksville: Gazette Job Print, 1884), 17.

⁵ Alexander Sneed, “Rockingham County,” in Albert Ray Newsome, “Twelve North Carolina Counties in 1810-1811,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 6 (July 1929): 295. Articles written by residents of twelve counties were submitted to the *Star* (Raleigh) at the request of publisher Thomas Henderson. The original descriptions are contained in the Thomas Henderson letter book, 1810-1811, a bound volume of manuscripts in possession of the North Carolina Archives.

⁶ Butler, *Rockingham County*, 1.

⁷ R. C. Jurney, *USDA Soil Survey of Rockingham County* (Washington D.C.: United States Department of Agriculture, 1926), 2.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 3

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Water has also fostered the county's industries. Since the eighteenth century, gristmills, sawmills, and other small concerns have operated on the banks of the county's rivers and streams. Alexander Sneed notes several, at least one of which was producing enough flour to warrant marketing it in Petersburg and Fayetteville.⁸ In the 1830s, a textile mill was built at Leaksville Factory, which eventually became Spray, on the Smith River and by the turn of the twentieth century, several textile factories were in operation on the Smith and Mayo rivers.

Rockingham County's average temperature is just less than sixty degrees Fahrenheit and the growing season lasts for more than two hundred days. Floods are relatively rare. Songbirds, waterfowl, and other wildlife such as deer, rabbits, opossums, beavers, raccoons, squirrels, and foxes abound in the county.⁹

Among these earthbound attributes two meteorites have landed. The Deep Springs meteorite fell in 1846, weighed 25.4 pounds, and is held by the North Carolina Museum of Natural History. The second weighed eleven pounds and was discovered on Smith's Mountain in 1866. It was subsequently broken into pieces, which are now housed at the state's natural history museum and at museums in Paris, London, and Vienna.

Other items of interest have emerged from the county's terrain. Coal, iron ore, and mica were the chief objects of mining operations as early as the late eighteenth century when iron ore was first excavated. Coal was discovered in 1821 and mica mines were established in the late 1800s and most recently in the 1940s. The first dinosaur tracks found in North Carolina were discovered at the Solite quarry near Eden in 1970. Many other plant fossils as well as smaller prehistoric animals have been found across the county.¹⁰

Rockingham County, while generally rural and agrarian, is the home of several towns. Leaksville, established in 1795, was the earliest but was followed in 1798 by the founding of Wentworth where the courthouse had been located since 1787. Madison, chartered in 1815, was one of the few towns to actually materialize during a period of real estate speculation in the 1810s. The Reidsville post office was established at a crossroads settlement in 1829. In the 1840s, a mill village began to flourish around John Motley Morehead's textile mill on the Smith River. Called Leaksville Factory, the community was actually east of Leaksville and in 1889, its name was officially changed to Spray. Stoneville and Ruffin, both antebellum settlements with only a few inhabitants, were incorporated in 1877 and 1887 respectively after railroads revitalized these communities. Mayodan, the mill village associated with Mayo Mills, was chartered in

⁸ Newsome, "Twelve North Carolina Counties," 297.

⁹ Butler, *Rockingham County*, 3.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 2-4 and Robert Carter, interview by the author, September 5, 2003.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 4

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

1899; the mill village of Draper, east of Spray, followed in 1905. In 1967, Leaksville, Spray, and Draper merged to form the city of Eden.

Rockingham County's population has steadily increased over the last two hundred years. The 1790 census recorded 6,211 inhabitants, including 1,113 enslaved persons. By 1810, 10,316 people lived in Rockingham County, 2,114 of who were enslaved. As the nineteenth century progressed, the growing slave population reflected the strengthening of the plantation-based tobacco economy. While twenty percent of the population was enslaved in 1810, as of 1840, thirty-four percent (4,572) of Rockingham's 13,442 residents were slaves. Those numbers increased until thirty-eight percent (6,318) of the county's population of 16,746 was enslaved on the eve of the Civil War. After a small decline immediately following the war, the county's population rose to 21,744 in 1880 and to 25,363 by 1890. Unlike neighboring Stokes and Caswell counties, where limited industry stymied or reversed population growth, Rockingham County's economy modernized and by 1900, 33,163 people called the county home.¹¹ By 1930, 51,083 people lived in Rockingham County. During the twentieth century, the population steadily grew by five to six thousand people every decade, reaching nearly seventy thousand by 1960 and ninety-two thousand by the most recent census in 2000.¹²

While all these people live within the natural setting of Rockingham County, they also live among manmade buildings, some more than two hundred years old.¹³ The earliest are one- or two-room log or frame buildings, some hastily built for short-term shelter and others soundly constructed with careful attention to neat assembly and finishing. As the county's population grew and prospered, the area's new houses tended to be larger and more ornamented, although the simple one-room dwelling was built into the twentieth century. After the Civil War, mechanization afforded more people the opportunity to build larger and more ornamented dwellings and by the early twentieth century, transportation was spreading nationally popular design across the county, albeit at a fairly slow pace. Today, the county is home to a rich architectural history, displaying both stylish up-to-date ideas and an adherence to traditional building patterns that reflect

¹¹ Rockingham County grew by 11,419 between 1880 and 1900. Stokes County by only 4,467 and Caswell County lost 2,797 people during the same time period. United States Census data accessed via <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu>.

¹² United States Census data accessed via <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu> and www.co.rockingham.nc.us.

¹³ Throughout this report, a survey site number consisting of the letters "RK" and a number will follow any mention of a site, building, or structure. The survey site number corresponds to a file about that property housed with the State Historic Preservation Office in Raleigh. Buildings, sites, and structures mentioned without survey site numbers are no longer in existence. Properties that have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places will also be accompanied by the letters "NR" followed by the date the property was listed.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 5

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

the county's embrace of a modern landscape of four-lane highways and modern industries while caring for and using old houses, traditional field patterns, and established downtowns.

Native American Occupation and European Settlement to 1812

When the first humans arrived in the area that would become Rockingham County is not known, but Native Americans are believed to have inhabited the region at least 10,000 years ago. Archaeological evidence suggests that Native Americans in the Piedmont region of North Carolina lived in round, bark-covered dwellings. They grew corn, beans, and squash, and hunted deer, elk, bear, and other small game. Fresh water mussels, snails, and fish also made up part of the Native American's diet. Evidence of the Native American presence can be found all along the course of the Dan River as it crosses the county, but the only tribe identified in Rockingham's Dan River valley is the Siouan-speaking Saura who may have come to the area as early as 1400.¹⁴

William Byrd noted a settlement site called Lower Saura Town (31Rk1; NR 1984) during his 1733 expedition to survey his tract of land in present-day northern Rockingham County. Byrd described the location and marked it on a map as "Sauro Town" at the confluence of Sauro Creek (now called Town Creek) and the Dan River. In the early 1780s, British tourist and observer John F.D. Smyth stated that the Sauras were once a great nation although they had left only their name attached to two settlements, upper and lower Saura Town.¹⁵

Archaeologist Joffre L. Coe used Byrd's information to locate Lower Saura Town, and he organized an excavation in 1938.¹⁶ Byrd believed the site was last occupied as recently as 1703, probably based on oral traditions or visual evidence of cultivated fields, but the 1938 excavation, research in the early 1950s, test pits dug in 1984, and further excavations in the late 1980s indicate that the Sauras may have had some European contact, but evacuated the settlement by the late 1600s.¹⁷ In any case, Native Americans were not living in Rockingham County by the early 1700s; having been the object of Seneca attacks, the Sauras joined the Keyauwee in upper South Carolina by 1710.¹⁸

¹⁴ Butler, *Rockingham County*, 6.

¹⁵ Smyth, *Tour*, 253.

¹⁶ Daniel L. Simpkins, "31Rk1," Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, 1984, section 7, 1.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 2, and notes provided by Lindley Butler.

¹⁸ Butler, *Rockingham County*, 6.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 6

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

European traders probably passed through the territory that would be Rockingham County as early as the late 1600s. In 1673, Joseph Hatcher, Henry Hatcher, and Benjamin Bullington carved their initials and the date, May 24, in a tree either in southern Virginia or Caswell County, very near Rockingham County. Sixty years later, William Byrd saw the initials and recognized them as those of the Hatchers and Bullington, whom he knew to have traded with the Sauras.¹⁹

William Byrd's 1728 survey of the boundary between North Carolina and Virginia and his 1733 visit to inspect the 20,000-acre tract that was part of his payment for the earlier survey comprise the first recorded extensive travels by a European in the territory that would be Rockingham County. During the dividing line survey, Byrd recorded evidence of Native Americans, the terrain, and the game, including buffalo. He gave more thorough descriptions of the land and its flora and fauna during 1733 as he surveyed and explored his personal tract of land, which he called the Land of Eden, in northern Rockingham County. On the western edge of his property along the Smith River, which he called the Irvin River after his fellow surveyor, Alexander Irvine, Byrd found "nothing but stony hills, and barren grounds, clothed with little timber, and refreshed with less water," but he believed the "treasure in the bowels of the earth may make ample amends for the poverty of its surface."²⁰ Along the Dan, Byrd found the "air wholesome" and the soils fertile:

All the Land we Travell'd over . . . from the river Irvin [Smith] to Sable Creek [Wolf Island], is exceedingly rich. . . Besides whole Forests of Canes, that adorn the Banks of the River and Creeks thereabouts, the fertility of the Soil throws out such a Quantity of Winter Grass, that Horses and Cattle might keep themselves in Heart all the cold Season without the help of any Fodder.²¹

Byrd was especially taken with the grasses in the bottomlands, noting that they grew as "high as a man on horseback," and upon leaving the piece of land known today as Lower Saura Town, he was so taken with the view that he could not help but turn and look back until the meadow was no longer in sight.²²

During the mid-eighteenth century, North Carolina's backcountry began to fill as thousands of settlers from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, and Virginia traveled south on the Great Wagon Road. Just south of present-day Roanoke, Virginia, one fork of

¹⁹ Byrd, *Westover*, 114.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 112.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 75.

²² *Ibid.*, 113.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 7

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

the road made its way to Stokes County where it branched again to bring settlers to the Mayo River valley. Many of Rockingham County's first European settlers probably followed this route, but the exact period of their arrival remains unknown.

Rockingham County was part of the Granville District, a sixty-mile-wide strip of land extending from the coast to the mountains with Virginia as its northern border. The district was created because Lords Proprietor, Sir George Carteret did not sell his one-eighth interest in the colony to the Crown in 1729 like the other Proprietors did. By the early 1740s, it was necessary to delineate a tract of land to correspond to this interest for Carteret's heir, who inherited the title Earl of Granville. The district, however, was not well organized. Inept and deceitful officials made land grants but on the whole, mismanaged the district, creating a disorderly section of the colony in which irate throngs disrupted tax collection and many of the residents were squatters.²³ Although the Granville District was not dissolved until the beginning of the Revolution, land grants were so disorganized that in 1750, the provincial attorney general stepped in to survey the land and began making orderly sales and grants.²⁴

The county's earliest land grants were to Robert Jones in the 1740s, to John Jude on the Mayo River in 1752, to William Rice and Owen Sullivant on Matrimony Creek in 1753, and in 1755 to John Boyd on Troublesome Creek and to Thomason Harris on Hogans Creek.²⁵ Ayersville in the northwest, not far from the Mayo River, may have been settled as early as the 1760s according to oral tradition.²⁶ However, white settlement may predate these pioneers: a gravemarker discovered in Speedwell Presbyterian Church cemetery in the 1970s is inscribed, "Milton Bennett, Infant of Geo. Benet, died June 17th, 1739."²⁷ The authenticity of this stone has been questioned, but its legitimacy has been neither firmly refuted nor established.

Regardless of the identity of the first settlers and their arrival date in what would become Rockingham County, they were mostly Irish, Scottish, and English with a few French Huguenot exceptions. Most began coming to the area in the mid-eighteenth century, usually traveling from Pennsylvania and Virginia via the Great Wagon Road. Many, particularly those of English origin, were also moving southwestward from Maryland and westward from eastern North Carolina and southeastern Virginia. Matthew

²³ William Powell, *North Carolina Through Four Centuries* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 93-94.

²⁴ Butler, *Rockingham County*, 10

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Map drawn in 1930s in the North Carolina Writers Project source material, Works Progress Administration, ca. 1937, housed at the State Archives, Raleigh, N.C.

²⁷ The stone was removed from the cemetery and is housed inside the church in a glass case.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 8

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Rowan, reporting to the Board of Trade in June 1753, noted that “in the year 1746 I was up in the Country that is now Anson, Orange and Rowan Countys [which included Rockingham], there was not then above one hundred fighting men there is now at least three thousand for the most part Irish Protestants and Germans and dayley increasing.”²⁸ Despite Rowan’s reference to Germans, very few pioneers of German origin lighted in Rockingham County, in great contrast to neighboring Stokes County.

Even with a steady stream of settlers, eighteenth-century Rockingham County remained a frontier. Englishman John F.D. Smyth, traveling in the area over thirty years after Rowan’s visit, was able to ride all day from a point near Hyco Creek, in Caswell County, west into Rockingham County “without once discovering the least vestige of human settlement, or habitation.”²⁹ In addition to low population density, Native Americans traversed the region regularly. Smyth writes of settlers frightened enough of Native Americans that they abandoned their plantations along the Dan for a stocked fort on the west side of Beaver Creek in southern Virginia. Smyth, however, found the Native Americans friendly and even camped one night with them in northern Rockingham County or southern Virginia. By the following day, the fortified citizens had heard about his contact and would not let him in their fort, fearing he was a friend of the Native Americans and possibly French owing to his English accent.³⁰

In 1781, the area that would become southern Rockingham County, but was then central Guilford County, was the scene of both American and British troop movements and camps. During February and March of that year, both before and after the March 15 Battle of Guilford Courthouse, British and American troops crossed and recrossed present-day Rockingham County. Troops from both sides camped at Troublesome Creek Ironworks (RK 6, NR 1972) and High Rock Ford (RK 1543) on the Haw River at various times during those two months.³¹

Following the war, settlers traveling south from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia continued to establish homes and farms in Rockingham County. Early landowners made applications to the state legislature to establish mills on Troublesome, Belews, and Hogans creeks. High Rock Mill and Davis Mill were operating by the 1750s. As early as 1784, a gristmill was operating on Beaver (Island) Creek and James Wright opened a tavern on the Haw River in 1783. Troublesome Creek Ironworks, first opened in

²⁸ W. L. Saunders, ed., *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, vol. V (Raleigh: State Printing Office, 1886-1890), 24.

²⁹ Smyth, *Tour*, 249.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 269, 278.

³¹ Survey and Planning Unit Staff (State Historic Preservation Office) and Lindley Butler, “Troublesome Creek Ironworks,” National Register Nomination, 1972, section 8, A.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 9

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

1770, was reopened and in 1791, during his southern tour, George Washington had breakfast there with the manager's family.³² While none of these early enterprises are standing, the Ironworks is an archaeological site with some aboveground ruins.

Several citizens of the northern section of Guilford County (soon to become Rockingham County) emerged as local and state leaders. James Gallaway and John Leak represented the county in the state House of Commons in 1783 and Gallaway served in the state Senate the following year. James Hunter and Hugh Challis were county justices in 1782 while Hunter served as sheriff and later county treasurer in the 1780s. Alexander Martin, who had a distinguished military career in the Revolution, was a state senator from 1778 to 1781, federal Constitutional Convention delegate in 1787, North Carolina governor from 1789 to 1792, and United States senator from 1793 to 1799.³³

The Creation of Rockingham County

On December 29, 1785, Guilford County was divided approximately in half and the northern half was named for Charles Watson-Wentworth, second Marquess of Rockingham (1730-1782). He was a former British Prime Minister responsible for repealing the Stamp Act and an opponent of Britain's American policy and the war.³⁴

Initially, county business was conducted at Eagle Falls, the plantation of Adam Tate on the Dan River, where the county justices intended to establish a county seat. That location, however, was deemed too far from the county's geographic center. In the spring of 1787, Constantine Perkins and Charles Gallaway purchased a two hundred-acre tract of land from Charles Mitchell on the east side of Big Rock House Creek. In August of that year, Perkins and Gallaway gave the county one acre for public use and in November court was able to convene in a new, if not completed, courthouse. Richard Sharp, the builder, was paid for his services in May 1788. In 1798, the seat was christened Wentworth for the county's namesake, Charles Watson-Wentworth.³⁵

The building stood approximately where the current courthouse is located in Wentworth. Based on the description given by visiting Guilford County justices in 1792, it was 36 ½ feet long, just over 24 feet wide, and a little over 11 feet to the cornice with porches 9 feet in length and 6 feet in depth. The exterior was covered in clapboards or weatherboards while the interior was sheathed in pine planks. The courthouse had a brick

³² Ibid., B.

³³ Charles Rodenbough, ed., *The Heritage of Rockingham County, North Carolina* (Winston-Salem, N.C.: Hunter Publishing Company, 1983), 87.

³⁴ Butler, *Rockingham County*, 19.

³⁵ Ibid., 20-21.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 10

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

foundation and a chestnut shingled roof.³⁶ Alexander Sneed described the building as a “tolerable wooden Court House, painted, and a common Goal [jail] built of wood and Stone, the Rooms of which are dark and miserable beyond description.”³⁷

The establishment of Leaksville at the confluence of the Smith and Dan rivers began during the period in which Wentworth was being organized. John Leak laid off the town’s original streets on his property on a bluff above the rivers and the first lot was purchased in 1795; the settlement was officially chartered in 1797. By 1800, Leak had lost much of his property through poor investment, but Alexander Sneed found the community to be a “delightful Spot” that he predicted would become one of the best locations for trade in the county once navigation on the Dan was improved.³⁸

Alexander Sneed provides one of the best descriptions of life in the county in the early 1800s. He declared that Rockingham’s wealth was fairly evenly distributed among its citizens and that due to the low price of land most residents were on the same economic rung. He asserted that “most of our Farmers and planters live on lands of their own which give them an air of Independence, rarely to be met with in Countries where the labouring part of the community are Vassals and dependants on the Rich.”³⁹

Based on 1790 census data, Sneed was correct that most whites stood on a similar economic footing, at least as reflected by slave ownership. Seventy-five percent of the 844 households recorded in 1790 did not own enslaved persons and among slaveholding families, most (sixty-nine percent) owned five or fewer slaves. Three percent of the county’s households owned more than ten slaves. Ten free nonwhite, non-Native American people lived in Rockingham County, but none independently; all were living within a white household, presumably as hired servants or laborers.⁴⁰

Entertainment was generally homespun. Music and games were especially popular and accessible. They could be enjoyed and participated in by large or small groups of any class in any location, usually with a minimal investment in equipment. Sneed recorded that dancing, “nefarious practices to delude the young and unwary,” horseracing, and the “vile and abominable practice of card playing” were favorite amusements in Rockingham County.⁴¹ In addition, mineral springs east of present-day Reidsville provided a place for relaxation and socializing. Known as Rockingham Springs in the late eighteenth century and as Lenox Castle (RK 1539) in the early

³⁶ Guilford County Court, minutes from November 1792 term.

³⁷ Newsome, “Twelve North Carolina Counties,” 299.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 298.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ United States Census, 1790.

⁴¹ Newsome, “Twelve North Carolina Counties,” 301

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 11

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

nineteenth century, the springs were the site of a meeting of the Council of State called by Governor Alexander Martin in 1790. Archibald D. Murphey, a Hillsborough attorney, visited the springs for his health and purchased the property in 1807. Thomas Ruffin, a North Carolina chief justice from 1833 to 1852, also owned the property for a time in the first half of the nineteenth century.⁴² The buildings associated with the springs were torn down in the early twentieth century, but the 1914 farmhouse, on the north side of N. C. Highway 150 near the Rockingham-Caswell County line, was built around one room and retains a Federal style mantelpiece and six-panel doors.

Another community meeting place was Wright Tavern (RK 7, NR 1970) in Wentworth. William Wright built the original section before 1814 and the addition, on the east side of the open dogtrot, was made soon thereafter. The two-story, side-gable frame building features a notable open breezeway or dogtrot in which the stair to the second floor is located. Beaded weatherboards cover the earlier section while plain weatherboards clad the eastern portion. William's son, James, operated the tavern from 1824 until 1870, after which it became known as the Reid House or Reid Hotel. Today, the tavern is still a place of community gathering, housing the post office, a small history museum, the headquarters for the county's historical society, and meeting space for the Society of Friends (the Quakers).⁴³

Transportation

Wide rivers, steeply-banked streams, poor roads, and in some places rugged terrain made travel in eighteenth and early nineteenth century Rockingham County difficult. The Dan River, in an unimproved state, was useful as a transportation corridor when water levels were not too low, but until navigational improvements were made in the 1820s, its most beneficial quality was its rich bottomlands. When Moravian Bishop Spangenberg came to North Carolina's Piedmont in 1752 to survey and inspect a large tract of land his church was purchasing, he recorded a sparse population of poor farmers and only a few tradesmen, all suffering from a lack of efficient transportation: "Trade and business are poor in North Carolina. With no navigable rivers there is little shipping; with no export trade of importance the towns are few and small."⁴⁴

What little travel and trade associated with Rockingham County was conducted via Virginia. In North Carolina, Salem to the southwest and distant Fayetteville (known

⁴² Butler, *Rockingham County*, 26.

⁴³ J. G. Zehmer and Sherry Ingram, "Wright Tavern," National Register Nomination, 1970, section 8, page 1.

⁴⁴ Extract from Bishop Spangenberg's Diary, 1752 from Adelaide L. Fries, ed., *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, vol. 1 (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Printing Company, 1922), 26.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 12

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

as Campbellton and later Cross Creek prior to 1783) to the southeast were of some economic importance, but the area's primary commercial markets were to the north and northeast. Roads leading east and southeast often became overgrown from a lack of use "because what little intercourse and trade the inhabitants of the Sawra settlements carried on with the seaports and more cultivated parts of the country, was either by roads down along the side of the Dan and the Roanoke to Halifax and Edenton, in North-Carolina, or across the country to Petersburg, and Richmond, &c. on the James River, in Virginia."⁴⁵

This is not to imply the county had no roads. Several major routes traversed Rockingham County in the eighteenth century. The Salem-Petersburg Road passed through what would become Madison and Leaksville in present-day Eden as it followed the north side of the Dan River and the Flat Rock Road crossed the southern half of the county. Matrimony Road (circa 1764), which led into Virginia, and a road (circa 1773) from Lone Island Ford on the Dan to Fayetteville linked the county to more distant points for trading purposes.⁴⁶ A branch of the Great Wagon Road, or a heavily traveled road that joined it, entered the northwest corner of the county while Dix's Ferry Road linked eastern Rockingham County to Caswell County. Other roads, most of which connected settlements, mills, and fords within the county, were cut throughout the late eighteenth century. The 1808 Price-Strother map illustrates numerous routes, and in 1810 Sneed notes, "the county is intersected in every direction with convenient Roads."⁴⁷

Industry and Commerce

During the early settlement period, water powered mills provided a place for farmers to grind their corn into meal and their wheat into flour. At least twenty-three stood in the county by 1800.⁴⁸ According to Sneed, only three mills, all located in the southeast quadrant of the county, produced quantities suitable for trade beyond the immediate community. James Patrick owned two of these mills, one on a branch of the Haw River and another on Troublesome Creek at the site of the Troublesome Creek Ironworks, which had closed again. Peter Bysor owned the third, located at the High Rock Ford on the Haw River. Both produced "flour of the first quality" that was shipped to Petersburg and Fayetteville.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Smyth, *Tour*, 262-263. "Sawra settlements" is a reference to the community in the vicinity of the Farley plantation at Lower Saura Town, on the south side of the Dan, opposite Eden.

⁴⁶ Rodenbough, *Heritage*, 38.

⁴⁷ Newsome, "Twelve North Carolina Counties," 297 and Butler, *Rockingham County*, 41.

⁴⁸ Rodenbough, *Heritage*, 23.

⁴⁹ Newsome, "Twelve North Carolina Counties," 297.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 13

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Rockingham County's residents produced saddles, hats, boots, "Cabinet ware," and "Rifle and Smothe bore guns." "Vast quantities" of whiskey and brandy were distilled in the county, part of which was exported, and cotton gins were common throughout the county in a number great enough to supply a market and home consumption. Sneed also recognized the production of textiles by females and stated that it was not uncommon "to see both Gentlemen and Ladies of the first respectability, in all public places of resort, dressed in a full suit of homespun, which would do honor to the citizens of any Country."⁵⁰

Agriculture

Most of Rockingham County's late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth farmers raised only the items they needed: food for themselves, feed for their livestock, and cotton and flax for home textile production, but by 1810, tobacco already dominated the county's agricultural cash crop output. The earliest record of tobacco in Rockingham County occurs in the 1770s when Elizabeth Farley, living on a very large Dan River plantation, corresponded with her father, William Byrd III. Byrd sold 26,000 acres on the Dan River to Francis and Simon Farley in 1755. The tract contained the Lower Saura Town settlement and "exceedingly rich low grounds." By 1769, Francis Farley, a planter on the island of Antigua, sent his son, James Parke Farley, to remove "accidental settlers," establish a plantation of his own, and lease other tracts.⁵¹ The younger Farley brought his daughters and wife, Elizabeth, who then corresponded with her father concerning tobacco crops and contact with Virginia via wagon.⁵² With this early and successful venture in tobacco production, the crop began an ascent to economic and agricultural prominence that would persist into the twenty-first century.

The Farleys, however, were particularly wealthy and do not reflect the county's average citizen. Rockingham County was still a frontier at the turn-of-the-nineteenth century; most farmers had to focus on survival and did not or could not produce large quantities, if any, of a non-food, cash crop that had to be transported to a market place. Thus, they operated subsistence farms producing nearly every necessity for humans and stock. Oats, corn, wheat, peaches, apples, and vegetables along with swine and cows were raised for home consumption. Flax and cotton were grown for textile production. Presumably, wild game and foraged items, such as berries and nuts, also contributed to the diet of the typical citizen in the early 1800s.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 299-300.

⁵¹ Smyth, *Tour*, 257-259.

⁵² Butler, *Rockingham County*, 12.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 14

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Nevertheless, subsistence farming did not preclude the production of small amounts of farm products for sale, and many farmers, including those with only relatively small tracts of land, managed to generate some surplus that was sold outside the region. These products included tobacco, cotton, beef, pork, flour, flax seed, wheat, beeswax, and hemp, which were usually marketed in Petersburg and Richmond. Those items that could “better bear the carriage to Fayetteville” were taken there and traded for salt.⁵³

Religion and Education

The county’s first religious institutions comprise three denominations. Presbyterians were active in Rockingham County from the time of the earliest known settlement, but they were not always successful in forming lasting congregations. Speedwell Presbyterian Church (RK 991) came into being in 1759 and some of the county’s oldest gravemarkers stand in its cemetery. It is also believed that both British and American casualties were buried here following the 1781 Battle of Guilford Courthouse. Haw River Presbyterian Church was established in either 1760 or 1762, but its congregation disbanded by the mid-1800s. Most Presbyterian congregations met informally at “preaching points” scattered throughout the county. Additional churches did not gain a foothold until the 1830s and 1840s.⁵⁴

It was the Baptists who attracted the most members and established the greatest number of lasting churches. Rockingham’s earliest Baptist churches are now Primitive Baptist congregations due to an 1830s split in the denomination, but during the early 1800s, they were simply Baptist. Matrimony Baptist Church (RK 996), located west of Eden and also known as Center Meetinghouse, was organized in 1776, followed by Wolf Island Baptist Church (RK 1393), north of Reidsville, the next year. Lick Fork Baptist (RK 1509) came into being in 1786, occupying land south of Ruffin, and Sardis Baptist Church (RK 1238) organized in 1801 near what would become Madison. These congregations referred to their church buildings as meetinghouses and the Matrimony congregation still gathers in a historic building with a meetinghouse layout: the pulpit stands against one side wall and pews surround it on three sides.⁵⁵

As early as the 1780s, Methodist circuit riders, including noted Methodist Bishop, Francis Asbury, were visiting Rockingham County. The first Methodist organization dates from this period, but Lowe’s United Methodist Church became the first lasting congregation when it organized in 1796. Salem (RK 1385) was established by 1799. Several other Methodist churches formed in the first years of the nineteenth century,

⁵³ Powell, *North Carolina*, 132-133 and Newsome, “Twelve North Carolina Counties,” 297.

⁵⁴ Rodenbough, *Heritage*, 97-99.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 100-103.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 15

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

including Hayse Meeting House, 1805, and now extinct; Sharon, 1818, near Ruffin; and Mt. Carmel, by 1813, near Oregon Hill. Although Sharon Methodist Church eventually disbanded, it was known for its campground where “preaching, singing, praying of the liveliest kind took place.”⁵⁶

Sneed confirms that Baptist and Methodist were the most common churches in 1810: “There are a great many (the number not known) both Baptist and Methodists Houses of Worship . . . These two professions are the prevailing ones in the County, Supposed to be nearly equal in number of communicants members &c.” Sneed also mentions the presence of a few “Universalists” and a meetinghouse built by subscription and open to all denominations.⁵⁷

Education in eighteenth and early nineteenth century Rockingham County was nearly non-existent and available only to the wealthy who could hire private tutors. In this respect, the county was no different than most others in North Carolina where illiteracy was rampant. One traveler crossing North Carolina in 1786 reported that no other state had done as little to promote education, science, and the arts. In 1792, only three schools in the state offered the basic elements of a classical education that would prepare students for university.⁵⁸ The state legislature took no steps to rectify the situation, introducing only one education bill between 1790 and 1802. Lawmakers rejected a plan for establishing a military school in 1802 and the next year, they killed two bills that would have created public academies. From 1804 to 1814 legislators did not discuss public education at all.⁵⁹

Of Rockingham County’s educational opportunities, Sneed wrote in 1810 that

There have been no schools established for the education of youth, more than for a common English education, of course, we have but few men of Science or a classical education; And altho’ we cannot boast of the progress of Literature, the comparative difference in the respect, between the present time and 25 years ago is almost beyond conception.⁶⁰

The improvements Sneed notes, however, were only applicable to the wealthy and education remained inaccessible to almost all the county’s residents. While a small number of physicians and attorneys served the county and some of the more privileged

⁵⁶ Unidentified source quoted in Rodenbough, *Heritage*, 105.

⁵⁷ Newsome, “Twelve North Carolina Counties,” 301.

⁵⁸ Powell, *North Carolina*, 245.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 247.

⁶⁰ Newsome, “Twelve North Carolina Counties,” 301.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 16

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

youths attended David Caldwell's academy in Guilford County, a formally educated citizen was a rarity in Rockingham County.⁶¹

Architecture

Buildings associated with Native American occupation do not remain in Rockingham County. Archaeological evidence along the Dan River in both Rockingham and Stokes counties suggests that the area's Native American population lived in round houses or lodges made of poles covered with bark. According to local legend, evidence of Native American activity exists at two sites: a cave purported to have been used for shelter and a group of rocks thought to have been used for grinding corn.⁶²

Structures certainly associated with Native Americans, and later with white settlers, are stone fish traps or fish dams, also known as fish weirs, found in the Dan and Mayo rivers. Low V-shaped rock walls funnel water and fish through a narrow opening at the point of the V where a person held a basket to catch the fish. Europeans repaired the old walls and built new ones; today, it remains unclear which dams or traps should be attributed to which group. Nineteenth-century navigation sluices and dams (NR 1984) modified many of the traps on the Dan. An 1879 survey of the river mentions six or seven. The best preserved is located in the Mayo River above the bridge carrying Anglin Mill Road (SR 1358). Other known traps are located on the Dan, Smith, and Mayo Rivers; one trap was located on Troublesome Creek in the southeast before it was looted for building stone in the 1920s.⁶³

The first buildings constructed by European settlers are no longer standing, but they were most likely one-room dwellings. Most were probably log houses, although frame construction was used as well. While he does not describe the method of construction, Englishman John F. D. Smyth gives some insight into the use of an eighteenth-century Rockingham County home based on his stay at Lower Saura Town with a Mr. Bailey, "a common backwood's planter, with a large family of Bel Savages" and "some" slaves. "Mr. Bailey had only one room and, one bed, in his house." Smyth was offered Mr. and Mrs. Bailey's bed, but "took my chance" on a pallet on the floor where the remainder of the family slept, "promiscuously, men and women, boys and girls."⁶⁴

⁶¹ Ibid. and Butler, *Rockingham County*, 25.

⁶² Rodenbough, *Heritage*, 5.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Smyth, *Tour*, 250-251.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 17

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Sneed's 1810 account reveals nothing of the contents or uses of household rooms, but he stated that houses were "Generally of wood, some Framed but the greater part of hewn logs, covered with Shingles with Brick and Stone Chimneys, which render them more warm and comfortable than elegant."⁶⁵ He also notes that only one meetinghouse, which was open to all denominations, was frame while "a great many" log churches stood throughout the county.⁶⁶

Log was not just the poor man's building method. Alexander Martin was a prominent merchant, planter, attorney, and county justice who moved to Salisbury from his native New Jersey around 1760. By 1761, he had established a plantation on the Dan River at its junction with Jacob's Creek. He maintained homes in Salisbury and at Guilford Courthouse and represented Guilford County (of which present-day Rockingham was still a part) in the Second and Third Provincial Congresses. Martin served as a lieutenant colonel of the Second North Carolina Continental Regiment and later served in the state senate. In the 1780s, he was the governor of North Carolina and was one of the state's five delegates to the Constitutional Convention in 1787. Martin, with forty-seven enslaved people, was the largest slaveholder in the county in 1790. Obviously, he was a wealthy and influential man, but his house was log according to a 1937 description. The home was, according to oral tradition, covered in weatherboards, "boxed around the eaves," and surrounded by log buildings for "relatives and slaves."⁶⁷

Virtually all log homes from this early period, while almost certainly outnumbering frame, either have not survived or are unrecognizable due their lack of ornamentation or incorporation into a larger building. Only one example appearing to date from the first decade of nineteenth century, or earlier, was recorded during the survey: an unidentified house (RK1497) just east of the Oregon Hill community in the eastern half of the county. A steeply pitched, side-gable roof with flush gable ends and a boxed cornice tops this single-pen, one-and-a-half-story dwelling. A shed extends across the rear. The house stands on a fieldstone foundation and has a fine fieldstone chimney with a projecting course around the cap. Weatherboards cover the exterior and v-notches join the hewn logs. The interior was finished with plaster but it is unclear if this is an original treatment.

Although there is little doubt that log was the most common building material in early Rockingham County, what may be the two earliest surviving buildings in the county are frame outbuildings. The smokehouse behind the 1892 Wariner House (RK 1525) just

⁶⁵ Newsome, "Twelve North Carolina Counties," 299.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 301.

⁶⁷ North Carolina Writers Project source material, Works Progress Administration, ca. 1937, housed at the State Archives, Raleigh, N.C.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 18

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

south of Ruffin is a neat, nearly square, weatherboarded building with a boxed cornice and a steep gable roof terminating at flush eaves. Based on these architectural details, it was probably constructed in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. The office at Lower Sauratown (RK 25, NR 1984), the former seat of the Farley family and later the wealthy Brodnax family, is a one-room, side-gable building clad in molded weatherboards. Federal period woodwork from around 1825 finishes the interior, but the discovery of an earlier, heavily-weathered, window covered by the 1825 woodwork has led some to believe the Farleys may have built the office in the late eighteenth century.⁶⁸

The oldest known building for which a certain construction date is known is the Scales House (RK 1001), with a date of 1799 incised in its chimney. Henry Scales, with thirteen slaves in 1790, fell into the three-percent of the county's households that owned more than ten slaves. Scales was granted 1,800 acres on Buffalo Creek in the 1780s and is the most likely builder of this house, although one of his oldest sons would have been old enough to construct it. The Scales House is a frame dwelling with a saltbox roof sheltering a hall-parlor plan with an engaged back porch, now entirely enclosed, that originally included a porch room. A shed-roof porch, also with a porch room, extends across the entire façade, but is probably a later addition. Double-shoulder chimneys stand on each gable end and both feature paved shoulders and a diamond-shaped pattern created with glazed headers. Like many early houses in the county, the Scales House has flush gable ends and like most houses from any time period in the county, its chimneystacks stand away from the house. The house stands above a cellar with a large cooking fireplace.

Another house in Rockingham County may have early origins. At Mount Pleasant (RK 1197), a 1850s Greek Revival home west of Madison, the rear ell appears to date from the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. James Martin, Governor Alexander Martin's brother, lived on this land until he moved to Stokes County in the late 1700s. His daughter, Sarah, and her husband, Major Pleasant Henderson, married around 1800 and lived at Mount Pleasant from that point until 1838. Oral tradition holds that the house burned in the mid-1800s and the current house was built at that time. The front section bears this out, but the rear ell appears much older. It may be a portion of the earlier house or the entire house itself. The ell features a distinctive cat-slide roof, a boxed cornice, and a flush gable end terminating at two chimneys, one of which is double-shouldered. Large nine-over-nine sash windows pierce the elevation that faces the road while smaller six-over-six sash windows are located on the gable end. The entrance from the existing back

⁶⁸ Lindley Butler and Michael Southern, "Lower Sauratown Plantation," National Register Nomination, 1984, section 7, 1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 19

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

porch to the ell is an unusually tall opening which seems to correspond with the Federal style eight-panel door now installed at the main entrance on the front elevation.

The Means House (RK 1199) sits atop a knoll in northwestern Rockingham County overlooking Means Creek. Although it has been stripped of its interior finishes and rolled asphalt siding covers the exterior, the house likely was built around 1800 by Robert Means in the middle of a twenty-year period in which he bought and sold numerous tracts of land along the Mayo River and Means Creek. The one-room, one-and-a-half-story frame house stands on a fieldstone foundation. A door and one six-over-six sash window punctuate the front elevation. A fieldstone chimney occupies the south gable and the steep side-gable roof terminates at flush gable ends and a boxed cornice.

The Schoolfield House (RK 1384) probably dates from the first decade of the 1800s. This one-room, one-and-a-half-story log house features a steep, asymmetrical, double-pitched, side-gabled roof that extends over a full-width front porch. Beams that extend from the house to the outer porch posts have open mortises. A decorative frieze or latticework may have provided the original tenon. Interior woodwork and the chimney have been removed, but the house retains early six-over-six sash windows and a partially enclosed, narrow stair without winders. The rear porch has been enclosed and shed additions are attached to the west and south elevations. The house is remarkably similar to the circa 1800 James Roach House, which stood nearby until 2001.

The Hugh Challis and Frances Lindsay Stubblefield House (RK 1492) was probably built around 1809, the year in which the couple married and Hugh took ownership of 356 acres given to him by his father. Although the house is small, with just two rooms downstairs and two rooms in the upper half-story, it is one of the more finely finished homes in the county from this early period and is probably typical of the homes constructed by the county's most prosperous families. The side-gable, frame house stands on a fieldstone foundation. Stone chimneys with paved shoulders stand on each end. The roofline features flush gable ends and a boxed cornice. The window sash have been reoriented or removed, but were probably arranged with nine-over-nine or nine-over-six sash. The hall-parlor plan incorporates an enclosed stair. Each room retains a chair rail above flush board sheathing and identical Federal mantelpieces comprising horizontal panels below a denticulated molding and a narrow shelf. The rear door opens to an open breezeway and a ruinous log kitchen.

The Thomas and Elizabeth Guerrant House (RK 1499) is a deteriorated but unusual example of an early Rockingham County home. Constructed around 1806 when the Guerrants purchased this property, the house is a coastal plain cottage with a saddlebag plan. A wide fieldstone chimney with a projecting course around the top stands between the two front rooms. The west half is frame; the east is log. It is unclear if the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 20

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

house was built at once or if one section predates the other. A side-gable roof shelters the entire structure and engages rear shed rooms and a now-ruinous front porch. Six-over-six sash windows are centered in the gable ends. The west end of the porch terminates in a porch room, accessible only from the porch by a six-panel door. Three doors occupy the front elevation. One is an early six-panel door that opens into the western (frame) room. A batten door is centered on the front of the eastern (log) room and a short batten door between the two sections leads to a storage room. Weatherboards cover the exterior except the porch room's east elevation, which is clad in vertical flushboard sheathing. The house stands on a fieldstone foundation.

Buildings from Rockingham County's early European settlement are rare. Some settlers may have come to the county with the manpower and equipment to construct a substantial frame house upon arrival, but the greater number of homes built in this period were probably hastily constructed log buildings meant to provide shelter quickly, efficiently, and cheaply. As settlers established themselves, they replaced their first houses with better buildings or enclosed them within additions. Some were converted into outbuildings. Commercial buildings were very rare at the time and although there were a few mills serving the county's early population, examples of either from the period do not exist today. Like early houses, they were replaced when funds allowed, and water-powered mills were particularly susceptible to floods. Although it is impossible to say certainly because so few buildings predating 1812 remain, those buildings that do survive probably represent the best and most finely finished of their time – the houses and outbuildings too well constructed to tear down – or those spared from the forces of nature.

Speculation, Slavery, Tobacco: 1813-1860

Like the state, the county's population grew rapidly between 1810 and 1820, increasing 11.2% from 10,316 to 11,474. The numbers continued to rise throughout the antebellum years, growing by 62.3% to reach 16,746 by 1860. This steady climb indicates the stabilization of the county's society as it made the transition from frontier to established community with many prospering members.

One of the major events of the early 1800s had very little direct impact on this population. Although three companies of Rockingham County troops were called for service during the War of 1812, none saw active duty. Indirectly, however, the conflict had a great bearing on Rockingham County. The war highlighted transportation inadequacies in North Carolina and Virginia, which prompted both states to end decades-

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 21

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

old squabbles and work together to improve their shared rivers. The resulting rumors of better navigation on the Dan River soon drove riverside property values to unprecedented heights, from about \$10 per acre around 1813 up to twenty times that by the late 1810s; in some places, the rise was a phenomenal 3,000 percent.⁶⁹

Internal Improvements

Transportation had been one of North Carolina's greatest obstacles from its initial European settlement. Geographic factors, specifically a lack of rivers that were navigable farther west than the coastal plain, plus the state's pervasive attitude of inert satisfaction did not foster betterment in transportation, education, or any other area that would be government-supported. Some leaders planned internal improvements to overcome river rapids, rutted roads, poor bridge construction, and intermittent ferry service, but the public's apathy was seemingly insurmountable. Thus, by the early nineteenth century, North Carolina had earned the nickname of the Rip Van Winkle State.

Rockingham County faced these same problems, but the Dan in a relatively unimproved state was already being used for transportation when water levels permitted.⁷⁰ As a result, leaders had no trouble conceiving of the potential benefits of improvement, and when summarizing the activities of the General Assembly in 1825, the county's legislators devoted nearly all of their broadside publication to the progress (and lack of progress) of the Board of Internal Improvements. Even a report on the proposed state-owned bank and uniform currency was tied into the way these institutions would expedite internal improvements.⁷¹ Thus, as soon as one of the state's large-scale internal improvement projects finally got off the ground, Rockingham County welcomed it with open arms.

Internal improvements, particularly in the form of river dredging and building canals and locks to make inland water travel possible in North Carolina, had been discussed among lawmakers for years. Often, Hillsborough attorney, Archibald D. Murphey, a legislator, teacher, planter, judge and visionary advocate for improvements in agriculture, schools, and transportation was the leading champion of the cause. In-state bickering between the more commerce- and industry-oriented west and the plantation-based east as well as squabbles with Virginia prevented the implementation of meaningful plans for enhanced internal navigation until the War of 1812 highlighted the deficiency. In 1816, prompted by the newly recognized need, Virginia organized a

⁶⁹ Butler, *Rockingham County*, 31.

⁷⁰ Newsome, "Twelve North Carolina Counties," 296 and Smyth, *Tour*, 263.

⁷¹ Henry Baughn, Robert Martin, and James Barnett, "To the Freemen of Rockingham County," December 20, 1825. Broadside at Special Collections, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, N.C.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 22

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Roanoke Navigation Company to work with North Carolina's Roanoke Navigation Company, chartered in 1812, to clear the Roanoke River from Weldon to Virginia. In 1823, extensive canals and locks in Weldon were completed. Sluices, canals, and locks on the Roanoke's tributaries, including the Dan, followed.⁷²

In Rockingham County, this prospect prompted local and out-of-county speculators to promote both new and existing communities along the Dan as potential boom-towns that would become regional trade centers. Leaksville was one of the first towns to be swept up in anticipation as parcels around the town were slated for development. In 1813, James Barnett purchased a 2,912-acre tract adjacent to the town and the Smith River. On this land, he built a canal, dam, and grist mill and laid out lots upon which the proposed settlement of Jamestown could expand. Barnett's promotion increased the price of a half-acre town lot from between \$10 and \$20 in 1800, to as much as \$100 in the early 1810s. Prices continued to climb and during the year 1818, the cost of a lot jumped from \$500 to \$1,500. Naturally, real estate in neighboring Leaksville also increased in value.⁷³

Jamestown was just one of several towns on the drawing board in the early and mid-1810s. Lots in the proposed towns of Madison, Jackson, Farley, and Hairstonborough were advertised, and in some cases sold, at exorbitant prices. In Jackson, located at a bend in the Dan near the center of the county, for example, lots cost \$500 each in April 1818. Farley was sited southeast of present-day Eden on the former Farley estate. Hairstonborough may have been proposed for a location in the vicinity of the Hairston plantation immediately west of Rockingham County in neighboring Stokes County. Farley, Hairstonborough, and Hogtown were never more than a developer's dream or at most, unsold lots platted on a map, but at Jackson where unhappy parcel-owners sued the failed town's promoters, citing exaggerated claims about the future value of the lots, parcels were sold but the town did not materialize. Madison, however, one of the communities established in this environment of speculation, became the center of the county's antebellum tobacco manufacturing and while Barnett's Jamestown did not transpire as planned, his gristmill and improvements to the site set the scene for the industrial operations that became Spray, the county's largest industrial complex and the site of one of the earliest textile mills in the state.⁷⁴

⁷² Brent Glass, "Roanoke Canal Historic District," National Register Nomination, 1975, section 8, 1.

⁷³ Publications Committee of the Eden Historic Preservation Commission and Claudia Roberts Brown, Ruth Little, ed., *A Tale of Three Cities: Eden's Heritage, A Pictorial Survey of Leaksville, Spray and Draper*, 2nd ed., (Eden, N.C.: Eden Historic Preservation Commission, 1998), 7 and Butler, *Rockingham County*, 31-32.

⁷⁴ Bill Sharpe, "The Gem of the Piedmont," *Our State*, 28 March 1953, 5, Butler, *Rockingham County*, 32, and Eden Historic Preservation Commission and Brown, *Three Cities*, 7.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 23

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Despite rampant real estate speculation and over-promotion, improved river travel did, in fact, become a reality in early nineteenth century Rockingham County. By 1826, improvements reached Leaksville and in 1828, the river was open to Madison. Eventually, batteaux, barge-like, shallow-draft craft, could reach Stokes County, but Madison was the westernmost landing.⁷⁵ The Roanoke River and its tributaries from Salem, Virginia in the Blue Ridge were now effectively open to the Atlantic Ocean, and Rockingham County had a unique link to Virginia. The Dan flows from Rockingham County, momentarily arching into Virginia before clipping the northwest corner of Caswell County and returning to Virginia. From there, its waters do not return to North Carolina until they have joined the Roanoke River, which turns south into North Carolina's northeastern corner. Thus, Rockingham County enjoyed an easier connection with the trading centers of Norfolk, Petersburg, and Richmond relative to neighboring Stokes, Caswell, and Guilford counties.

The river was used primarily for transporting goods, such as tobacco, flax seed, flour, and whiskey on batteaux, but the Dan River Steam Navigation Company contemplated launching a steamboat on the river in Virginia in the mid-1800s. The plan did not come to fruition however, as the company's promoters found that such a craft would be too heavy to ply the Dan's shallow waters when loaded with freight. Thus, had the investors operated the vessel, it would have been a passenger vessel or a towboat for batteaux.⁷⁶

While the river was the easiest way to ship cargo, the Dan, the Mayo, the Smith, and the numerous streams and creeks made travel in the county somewhat difficult. Fords crossed smaller waterways and both fords and ferries traversed the larger rivers, but when the water was high, these methods were not viable. Although small wooden bridges had been built across the Haw River and Troublesome Creek by the late 1700s, the major waterways were not crossed until the 1830s when privately constructed covered toll bridges first spanned the Dan at Leaksville and Madison. The 1830s Madison bridge was replaced in 1842 but washed away in the great August freshet of 1850. The Madison bridge was rebuilt in 1851 and operated into the 1860s. The first Leaksville bridge served that town from 1832. Following the 1850 flood, a covered structure was built in 1852 and travelers were charged ten cents per crossing. Another bridge (Settle's Bridge) crossed the Dan at Eagle Falls, but was also washed away in 1850. In the 1850s, the Mayo River

⁷⁵ Butler, *Rockingham County*, 30

⁷⁶ M. and J.W. Parks, engineers. *The Dan River Steam Navigation Company* (Baltimore: John W. Woods, Printer, 1855), 1-2.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 24

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

was bridged, but it, too, washed away. The Smith River was first spanned in 1854 by a wooden truss bridge at Island Ford, near Leaksville Factory (later Spray).⁷⁷

These bridges, of course, were associated with the roads crossing Rockingham County by the mid-nineteenth century, as an 1865 map illustrates.⁷⁸ The numerous old roadbeds still visible today also illuminate that fact. One of the most important nineteenth century roads was the stage route linking Salem and Salisbury with Danville and other Virginia towns. In the antebellum period, an uneventful trip from Salem to Danville would take about three days and bring travelers through Rockingham County, roughly following the path of U.S. Highway 158 from southwest Rockingham County to U.S. Highway 29.⁷⁹

One outpost on this route was Wright's Crossroads, the seat of one of William Wright's early nineteenth century taverns (the other being in Wentworth). In 1814, Ruben Reid and his wife Elizabeth Settle moved to a farm in the vicinity of Wright's Crossroads where they opened a store and operated an inn in their home. In 1829, the Reids requested a post office for the settlement. The post office was named Reidsville and David Reid, the Reids' sixteen-year-old son and future North Carolina governor, was the first postmaster.⁸⁰

The Formation of Towns and the Emergence of Commerce and Industry

Following the War of 1812, the wartime demand for American products declined, sparking an economic slump known as the Panic of 1819. The collapse brought land speculation to an end in Rockingham County while prices for the state's main cash crops plummeted: cotton was selling for thirty-three cents per pound in January of 1819, but by June the price was only twenty cents and in the fall, as the harvest came in, prices dropped lower. Tobacco fared no better. Having commanded \$20 to \$40 per hundred pounds previously, it was only selling for \$4 to \$8 per hundred by June 1819.⁸¹

Speculative towns such as Farley and Jackson suffered fatal blows. By August of 1818, lots in Jackson were fetching around \$1,000, but prices began to drop the next year when the town and improvements to the Dan and Roanoke rivers did not materialize as quickly as promoters had predicted. With the Panic of 1819, prices plummeted to twenty-five dollars and finally to one dollar by August 1819. In 1826, the state supreme court

⁷⁷ Butler, *Rockingham County*, 48-49; Rodenbough, 39; and Eden Historic Preservation Commission and Brown, *Three Cities*, 12.

⁷⁸ Newsome, "Twelve North Carolina Counties," 297 and Butler, *Rockingham County*, 41.

⁷⁹ Butler, *Rockingham County*, 34-35.

⁸⁰ Carl Goerch, "Rockingham County," *Our State*, 20 September 1941, 3 and Rodenbough, 123.

⁸¹ Butler, *Rockingham County*, 33.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 25

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

ruled in favor of John Motley Morehead, who had purchased land in Jackson, by finding that Jackson's promoters had exaggerated claims and inflated bids.⁸²

In addition to the financial panic, poor farming practices and a general neglect of natural resources plagued the state and probably Rockingham County as well. Statewide, the assessed value of land dropped from an average of \$2.04 per acre in 1815 to \$1.54 per acre in 1833.⁸³ Inadequate and difficult transportation forced farmers to spend half their crop to get the remaining half to a market, and many planters, particularly large landowners and slaveholders, moved to Mississippi and Alabama. One-third of North Carolina's population left between 1815 and 1850.⁸⁴ By 1850, thirty-one percent of all native North Carolinians in the United States lived in another state. In Indiana alone, 163 North Carolina-born legislators served in that state between 1816 and 1890.⁸⁵

From nearby Person County, one contemporary recalled that "scarcely a week passed but word came that some of our neighbors had gone to Texas."⁸⁶ From Rockingham County, Josiah Settle, a wealthy plantation owner and member of one of the county's most prosperous families, left for Mississippi.⁸⁷ Pleasant Henderson and his wife Sarah, the daughter of Governor Alexander Martin's brother, James, moved to Tennessee from their Dan River plantation in 1838.⁸⁸ William Fewell, whose house is one of the county's best examples of Federal architecture, left his home and considerable landholdings to his daughter when he, too, relocated to Tennessee in 1839.⁸⁹ Also departing for Tennessee were some members of the extremely wealthy Gallaway family.⁹⁰

Nevertheless, Rockingham County began to prosper during this period, despite the fact that the county was not immune to problems plaguing the entire state, such as wasteful farming practices, educational inadequacies, poor transportation, and economic conditions so bad that hundreds of thousands of people left North Carolina in the first

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Powell, *North Carolina*, 249.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 250.

⁸⁶ A. R. Foushee, *Reminiscences: A Sketch and Letters Descriptive of Life in Person County in Former Days* (Roxboro, 1921), 11.

⁸⁷ Robert W. Carter, interview by author, 10 October 2002, Wentworth, N.C.

⁸⁸ Mrs. J. J. Van Noppen, "History of Some Old Rockingham Houses: Mt. Pleasant," *Messenger* (Madison, N.C.), 10 October 1950.

⁸⁹ David W. Parham and Joe Mobley, "Fewell-Reynolds House," National Register Nomination," 1979, section 8, 2.

⁹⁰ Nannie May Tilley, *The Bright-Tobacco Industry: 1860-1929* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1948), 16.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 26

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

half of the nineteenth century. Although the real estate bubble on the Dan River burst, as Archibald D. Murphey predicted in 1817, one town materialized and previously-established Leaksville thrived.

Madison was chartered in 1815, and in 1818, ninety-six half-acre lots were sold at auction. The town became the westernmost trading center on the Dan, but its main economic engine was tobacco manufacturing. Tobacco processing facilities gained a foothold in Madison in the 1830s and 1840s, even though most antebellum tobacco processing took place on the farm where it was pressed or twisted into plugs or ropes for chewing or shredded for smoking.⁹¹

Leaksville can trace its roots back to 1795, but its initial growth was slow. The settlement suffered from over promotion and land speculation in the 1810s, but as river transportation improved and as the county's farms increased production, which meant farmers had a surplus for sale, the town began to prosper as a trading center. Future North Carolina governor and North Carolina Railroad leader, John Motley Morehead, was one of the town's first businessmen. Morehead, a Virginia native, spent his childhood in Rockingham County, and although he was residing in Greensboro by the early 1800s, he had considerable business interests in and around Leaksville with partners William Barnett and William A. Carrigan.⁹²

Spray, which like Leaksville is now part of Eden, also has early origins and was one of the locations of Morehead's investments. In 1813, James Barnett purchased tract number twelve of the vast Farley estate, a parcel of nearly 3,000 acres straddling the Smith River, east of Leaksville. Barnett soon built a wooden wing dam and canal on the west side of the river to power his five-story gristmill. The operation passed to his son, William who expanded the complex to include a sawmill, oil mill, carding mill, cotton gin, blacksmith shop, and general store.⁹³

In 1835, John Motley Morehead purchased the site from Barnett, with whom he had been a business partner. Morehead added a textile mill to the building group and hired John Hall Bullard, a Massachusetts textile mill mechanic, to build and manage it. The stone building, complete with a monitor roof, was producing yarn by 1840. A few years later, a weaving operation was added, and eventually the mill could process wool. Morehead built housing for the mill hands and a cottage for his own use.⁹⁴ A visitor in 1859 described the outfit for the *Fayetteville Observer*:

⁹¹ Butler, *Rockingham County*, 32.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 42.

⁹³ Eden Historic Preservation Commission and Brown, *Three Cities*, 7, 9,

⁹⁴ Butler, *Rockingham*, 32 and Eden Historic Preservation Commission and Brown, *Three Cities*, 9-10.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 27

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

[It is] a large stone building . . . constructed in the most substantial manner, and of the most durable materials. It is situated at the mouth of a magnificent canal, leading from Smith's river, and operated by the largest and finest metal wheel that I have ever seen. Near by are the oil mills, flour mills, and saw mill – all operated by the water of the same canal, which appears to have a fall of at least 25 feet.⁹⁵

Morehead's Mill or Leaksville Factory, as it was called, employed forty people in 1840 and in 1857 produced 120,000 yards of osnaburg (a rough, muslin-like, unbleached, cotton fabric), 150,000 yards of sheeting, and 240 pounds of yarn.⁹⁶ The enterprise was the county's only large-scale, antebellum industrial endeavor and was one of the largest industrial complexes in the state. In fact, the plant was among the state's earliest textile factories and, according to historian William S. Powell, was one of the five mills that pioneered the industry in North Carolina.⁹⁷

While Leaksville, Madison, and Wentworth were the only substantial towns in Rockingham County before the Civil War, several communities, many of which are no longer on the map, hosted a post office or a polling place. They included Rawlinsburg (south of Ruffin), Ayersville, Mayo (later renamed Stoneville), Pleasantville, Elm Grove, Dan River, Oregon, and Lawsonville. Other settlements were Danbury, a community at Alexander Martin's plantation, Rocky Springs, and Sauratown, a settlement on the Farley family's property.

Tobacco processing emerged as the county's antebellum industrial backbone. Farmers built factories on their rural farms and entrepreneurs established manufacturing operations in the fledgling towns, particularly in Madison. In 1840, tobacco factories employed 160 people. On the eve of the Civil War, twenty-five tobacco factories could be found in the county, employing 375 citizens. Although Rockingham County had more factories than any other county in the state, they produced smaller quantities and employed fewer people than elsewhere. Much of this manufacturing output was concentrated in Madison, but factories existed across the county in settlements and on farms. The Garrett tobacco factory (RK 1011) operated in the northwest corner of the county while another factory (RK 993) in the Bethany vicinity also produced chewing tobacco.

While tobacco formed the base for the county's industry, other manufacturing operations flourished on the banks of the county's streams and rivers. Thirty-six gristmills, twenty-five sawmills, thirteen flour mills, five tanneries, two oil mills, a

⁹⁵ *Fayetteville Observer*, 1859 quoted in Butler, *Rockingham County*, 43.

⁹⁶ Butler, *Rockingham County*, 43.

⁹⁷ Powell, *North Carolina*, 315.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 28

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

furniture factory, and Morehead's Leaksville Factory operated in Rockingham County in 1840. At the grist mill at High Rock on the Haw River, a sawmill, oil mill, cotton gin, and cooper's shop were in operation. Similarly, George D. Boyd ran grist and saw mills and a wool-carding machine on his farm.⁹⁸ In addition, iron, lime, bricks, straw bonnets, caps and hats, and saddle and leather goods were locally manufactured. Manufacturing, mostly in tobacco production, but also in wagon and carriage building, tanning, textiles (at the single factory), and milling, employed 629 people by 1850. Seven people were involved with navigation, presumably as batteaux operators, and "learned professionals" or engineers numbered twelve.⁹⁹

Although Rockingham County residents traded in Salem and Fayetteville, the county's primary commercial connections continued to be with Virginia as the nineteenth century progressed. Wagons from Rockingham County made regular trips to Lynchburg and Danville. Batteaux took the county's products to Danville and ultimately to Petersburg and returned with items from the North, particularly from New York, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. Letters written throughout the mid-1800s among the Brodnax family, the county's wealthiest family, and their friends reveal that the upper echelon of the county's society traveled frequently and with relative ease along the eastern seaboard. Certainly the family would have made many purchases in northern cities, but Mary Brodnax was able to obtain many household items, such as fabric, notions, a coat, vinegar, a "fine comb," and toothbrushes, from Reynolds and Brothers in Leaksville.¹⁰⁰

Only a few merchants operated within the county before the Civil War. In 1850, a mere twenty-one citizens were involved in commerce, among them George D. Boyd. In addition to the saw and grist mills on his plantation, he ran a store in a building that had been his first home. From here, he sold the products of his mills as well as fabric and a wide array of general merchandise. He filled special orders for hats and dresses through his northern trading connections, presumably creating an economic as well as a cultural link to the greater world for himself and his customers.¹⁰¹

The commerce of buying and selling enslaved workers was not known to have occurred on a large scale in any one place in Rockingham County. In other words, there is no known slave market in the county. Individual plantation owners or traders working

⁹⁸ J. A. and Honesta Dobyms, current owners of the Boyd House, interview by author, 27 August 2002, Reidsville, N.C.

⁹⁹ United States Census, 1840, and United States Census, Schedule 5, Products of Industry, 1850.

¹⁰⁰ Invoice from Reynolds and Brothers to Mary Brodnax, 1856, in Brodnax Family Papers, University of North Carolina, Southern Historical Collection, Manuscripts Department.

¹⁰¹ Dobyms interview.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 29

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

on their behalf generally purchased enslaved workers, whose numbers rose markedly in the two decades before the Civil War, from Virginia, Maryland, South Carolina, or in other areas of North Carolina. R.G. Hopper, Anselom Reid, Josiah Settle, Obadiah Fields, and Archibald H. Boyd actively traded slaves while living in Rockingham County. Archibald Boyd shuttled enslaved workers within Rockingham County while Josiah Settle, despite his continued trade in humans, apparently started a family with one of his chattel, eventually settling her and their children in Ohio.¹⁰²

Obadiah Fields traded actively between 1820 and 1828, buying and selling slaves in North and South Carolina and Virginia. During his travels, which could last from weeks to months, Fields wrote to his wife, Jane, and their four children, and included details of his sales and purchases. An 1820 bill of sale from Robert Martin of Rockingham County recorded the sale of four enslaved persons, Moses (about twenty-two years old), Hannah (about seventeen years old), Robert (about eleven years old), and Robin (about nine years old), to Fields for \$1,700. One letter written in November 1822 from Greenville, South Carolina, documented a \$900 profit from the sale of more than a dozen slaves. According to Fields's records, young males in their twenties and thirties usually fetched between \$450 and \$550 while females generally sold for around \$200 or \$300 and children for between \$100 and \$200.¹⁰³

In 1829, David Walker, an African American living in Boston but formerly of North Carolina, called for abolition and slave uprisings in his *Appeal in Four Articles*. Two years later, Nat Turner led one such uprising in southeast Virginia. These two events, along with other slave uprisings in the South, including Denmark Vesey's insurrection planned for 1822 in Charleston, sparked fear among white southerners. Lawmakers in North Carolina and elsewhere enacted harsh laws restricting or completely forbidding the movement or education of slaves. Rumors about uprisings continually swept across the state, causing panic, paranoia, and zealous crackdowns on slave activity. In Bethania, in nearby Forsyth County, the white residents were so overcome with panic and fear that they took up arms and forbid their slaves "on pain of death to leave their lots."¹⁰⁴ While no major uprisings occurred in Rockingham County and no records have yet come to light concerning local fears, presumably the county's slave owners would have felt the threat of potential uprisings among the thirty-eight percent of the population that was enslaved by 1860.

¹⁰² Carter interview and Rodenbough, 23-24.

¹⁰³ Bills of sale and letters from Obadiah Fields to Jane Fields between 1820 and 1826 in the Obadiah Fields Papers, 1784-1855, Special Collections, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, N.C.

¹⁰⁴ Bethania diary cited in C. Daniel Crews, *Neither Slave nor Free: Moravians, Slavery, and a Church that Endures* (Winston-Salem, N.C.: Moravian Archives, 1998), 18.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 30

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Agriculture

Agriculture in Rockingham County in the first half of the 1800s reflected patterns witnessed across the state. Subsistence farms producing small quantities of cash crops, of which tobacco was the largest, continued to be the standard with most farms consisting of two hundred acres or less. Farmers often worked a quarter or less of their land, leaving the remainder for pasture or in timber. Cattle and swine were allowed to roam freely with yards and cultivated fields fenced.¹⁰⁵

Throughout the antebellum period, most Rockingham County citizens (about eighty percent) did not own slaves, but as the dependence on tobacco as a cash crop expanded, the slave population grew, as did the number of planters owning a substantial number of slaves. While slaves comprised twenty percent of the county's population in 1810, by 1830, they made up thirty-three percent. Roughly ten percent of the county's white households owned one or two slaves and another ten percent owned ten or more. About twenty-five landowners held more than twenty slaves and of those, Thomas Hamlin, Robert Gallaway Sr., and Robert Brodnax owned fifty, sixty-three, and one hundred and forty-one respectively.¹⁰⁶

Modifications in tobacco processing fostered slavery and a single-crop system. Around 1830, Dr. Davis G. Tuck of Halifax County, Virginia, developed the first workable flue-curing system for tobacco. The process replaced the open fire with a furnace that fed flues, which distributed heat throughout the barn, and although another forty years would pass before flue-curing became the standard, the development was revolutionary. Another change occurred in 1839 when Stephen, a slave on Abisha Slade's Caswell County farm, accidentally discovered the process of curing tobacco to an unspotted golden color. Like flue-curing, the importance of this discovery, which created the bright-leaf for which the Piedmont region of North Carolina would become famous in the later nineteenth century, eventually, but not immediately, revolutionized tobacco curing in Rockingham County. Before the Civil War, uses for this bright-leaf tobacco were limited to a wrapper or outer leaf to cover plug or chewing tobacco.¹⁰⁷

These transformations, while not adopted for decades, were part of the increasing importance of tobacco in the county and the state. In 1840, twenty-eight percent of the county's 13,442 residents both slave and free, engaged in agriculture: practically every

¹⁰⁵ Rodenbough, 20.

¹⁰⁶ United States Census, Population Returns, 1830.

¹⁰⁷ Jerome E. Brooks, *Bright Leaf and Gold: Tobacco in North Carolina* (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, 1997), 20.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 31

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

adult male worked the land.¹⁰⁸ Between 1850 and 1860, the county's tobacco production escalated from 1,777,205 pounds to 3,158,333.¹⁰⁹ The population continued to grow, jumping from 14,495 in 1850 to 16,746 in 1860 and slave ownership became increasingly pervasive. By 1860, thirty-two percent of the county's white households owned enslaved workers, up from approximately twenty percent of the white households thirty years earlier. The small-scale owner, however, remained dominant with just under forty-percent of all slaveholders owning three or fewer.¹¹⁰

The 1850 agricultural census indicates the county's dependence on a single crop, but it also shows that some food crops were also grown. Most farms grew tobacco while nearly all produced wheat, corn, butter, Irish potatoes, and sweet potatoes. Some maintained sheep for wool. A small number also raised oats, beans, peas, and flax and a tiny number grew hay and rye. While most farmers had at least one horse as well as several cows all but eleven farmers raised swine. Surely some farmers were also growing or producing other foodstuffs for home consumption, but based on census returns, orchard production was nonexistent as were honey, molasses, and cheese, or their quantities were so small that they were not reported. As a result, the typical Rockingham County diet in the mid-nineteenth century probably consisted primarily of potatoes, corn products, butter, and various forms of preserved pork, unhealthy by today's standards but probably typical during the mid-nineteenth century.¹¹¹

Education and Religion

In 1813, education was only available to those who could afford a private tutor or, until 1824, the tuition and room and board to study at David Caldwell's academy in Greensboro. Some planters, such as Judge Thomas Settle who lived just east of Reidsville, had schools on their plantations. In 1820, classical academies were opened in Leaksville and Madison. For thirty dollars per term, a student could take courses in Latin, Greek, English, and science under the instruction of John Silliman at the Leaksville Academy. The school offered an elementary course in reading, writing, and arithmetic for twenty dollars and boasted a debating society and library. Students needing to board in Leaksville could find accommodations for eight to twelve dollars per month.¹¹²

While the Leaksville Academy operated in a brick building, the Madison Academy building was log. James F. Martin, a University of North Carolina graduate,

¹⁰⁸ United States Census, Population Returns, 1840.

¹⁰⁹ United States Census, Agricultural Census, 1850 and 1860.

¹¹⁰ United States Census, Population Returns and Slave Schedule, 1850 and Population Returns, 1860.

¹¹¹ United States Census, Schedule 4, Products of Agriculture, 1850.

¹¹² Butler, *Rockingham County*, 45.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 32

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

was the first teacher at the Madison Academy, which apparently prospered because a frame building replaced the log structure in 1844. Numa Reid opened another academy in Wentworth in 1844, and in 1855 Marinda Branson Moore opened Margarita Seminary near her home on Belews Creek. The textbook series she later created, *The Dixie Readers*, was published by her brother, Levi Branson, and widely used in the region.¹¹³

Public education came to the county in 1840. The previous year, the state organized a school system through which counties could vote to tax themselves to support education. The state provided partial funding for a teacher's salary while the county paid the remainder of the salary and built the school building. On January 20, 1840 a log school building in the Rockingham County community of Williamsburg opened as the state's first public school. Very little is known about this school, but George Garrett, who had been operating a private academy in the area, may have donated his building for the new school.¹¹⁴ By 1845, thirty-five school districts and thirty-nine teachers served the county under an education budget of \$2,706.20.¹¹⁵

Many denominations built new churches in the 1840s and 1850s, the period from which the county's oldest surviving church buildings date, although many congregations were organized earlier.¹¹⁶ Presbyterians established churches in the Shiloh community (Spring Garden, organized by 1832), Madison (by 1851), Wentworth (1859), and Leaksville (1860). Baptists continued to dominate the county, although they were experiencing significant divisions during this period, particularly over the issue of forming a Baptist state convention. Despite the differences, new Baptist congregations organized at Leaksville and Madison in 1841; Hogan's Creek Baptist Church was established in 1843. The Methodist Church also continued to grow and began moving into towns, establishing churches in Wentworth in 1836, Leaksville around 1840, and Madison in 1843. The only new introduction into the county's religious scene between 1813 and 1860 was the Episcopal Church, which established the Church of the Epiphany in Leaksville in 1844.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Ibid., 45-46.

¹¹⁴ Vance Swift, "First Public Free School," *Our State*, January 1987, 14.

¹¹⁵ Butler, *Rockingham County*, 45.

¹¹⁶ Matrimony Primitive Baptist Church may be housed in an older building, but it is so simple and so altered as to make its construction date impossible to determine or confidently estimate. Church records do not give any clue as to its construction date. A reference is made to a church building here in a 1789 deed. Rockingham County deed book C, page 17.

¹¹⁷ Rodenbough, *Heritage*, 102, 107.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 33

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Architecture

While North Carolina was generally considered to be stagnant between the 1810s and the late 1830s or early 1840s, Rockingham County's architecture tells the story of a population prospering economically from its river connections, agriculture, and manufacturing. Like much of the state, it was during this period that Rockingham County began transforming from a rugged outback whose residents were focused primarily on survival to a region with small towns, organized settlements, churches, and economic classes whose members expressed their status through architecture. As wealth began to be amassed, both in cash and land, property owners began distinguishing themselves by constructing houses and buildings with craftsmanship, detailing, and stylishness. Despite the state's sleepy reputation, the population was swelling and building projects and building improvements commenced, many after long delays caused by the Revolution. The relatively new towns of Raleigh and Chapel Hill were becoming important centers for government and learning. The state's crossroads and small ports were becoming notable towns enriched with fashionable architecture.

Leaksville, Madison, and Wentworth were established by 1818, and their citizens as well as the county's rural dwellers desired more substantial and stylish homes as their fortunes grew. As Dan valley planters became wealthy and as smaller scale farmers prospered, they constructed houses reflecting their accomplishments. New fashions probably came to the county via its river and overland trading connections with Virginia, which kept much of the population directly or indirectly in touch with the tastes of the outside world. Essentially, the frontier was stabilizing. Pioneers were becoming established farmers and planters, and settlements were growing into more cohesive communities and small towns. This stability manifested itself in two ways in the county's early nineteenth century architecture: Log construction continued to dominate, but it became more refined, and fashion was no longer just for those in the highest social tier but also for citizens of more limited means. Builders and building owners, rich and poor, however, stuck to traditional house plans and forms.

Houses

Log was the construction method used by the majority of the citizens, wealthy slaveholders and the poorest settler alike. The difference in this second generation of building is reflective of the overall refinement of the citizenry. These log houses, even the unadorned, single-pen dwellings, were built of finely and carefully hewn logs, neatly chinked and precisely notched together at the corners, usually with dovetails, half-dovetails, or V-notches. Unlike the probable initial wave of log construction, which

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 34

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

provided cheap and quickly assembled temporary shelter, these log homes were intended to last, while retaining the benefits of economy and efficiency.

Differences between the rich man's log house and that of the poorer were found in finishing materials and embellishment. While the poorer citizen whitewashed his walls, did not apply weatherboards to the exterior, and probably had only one heated room, the wealthier log house-dweller might finish his home with weatherboards on the exterior, flushboard sheathing or plaster inside, molded window and door trim, beaded ceiling joists, more decorative mantel pieces, and paneled doors. In either case, his resources and tastes would dictate how many, if any, decorative elements he could install; over time, the owner could add interior and exterior refinements as his resources permitted.

The Wiley Lowe House (RK 1251) is a simple single pen log house adorned with beads on its ceiling joists, but with plain window and door surrounds and whitewashed log walls. The house also has the typical Federal-period feature of a porch engaged beneath a broad side-gable roof. The hall-parlor Martin-Lewis House (RK 1132) in Ayersville is a more refined log house covered in weatherboarding. Interior walls are sheathed in beaded flushboards and the ceiling joists are also beaded. The Martins, while building with log, took the unusually lavish step of building two gable-end chimneys entirely of brick, a feature rarely seen on nineteenth century dwellings built by any class of citizen anywhere in the county. Still, the mantelpieces are exceedingly simple and the interior door is batten rather than a more refined paneled door. Both the Lowe House and the Martin-Lewis House are examples of modest log dwellings where great care was taken in finely finishing and notching the logs. In that light, they differ significantly from the less carefully constructed log houses built without benefit of a skilled craftsman, such as those intended to be temporary shelter, those built by poorer farmers, or those built later in the nineteenth century when log became relegated to construction for poor people alone.

Chimneys are another feature where varying levels of sophistication can be seen. If time did not allow for the gathering of fieldstone, if skills were not available for the laying of it, or funds did not permit the hiring of a mason, chimneys could be built of log and lined with mud. No such examples survive because the owner could replace the original with a better material at a later time and because the form was not durable. Fieldstone is undoubtedly the most common chimney material of the extant nineteenth-century buildings. Chimneys built entirely of brick are found only on the homes of the most successful farmers and merchants, but brick was also used for the stack of fieldstone chimneys, either originally or as a replacement if the fieldstone stack collapsed. Almost without fail, regardless of material, chimneys were located on the exterior and had free-

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 35

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

standing stacks. Double-shouldering, shoulder paving, and tumbled shoulders occur occasionally, while interior chimneys are nearly non-existent.

Headers arranged in a pattern decorate the 1831 John and Lucinda Settle Ellington House (RK 1313) chimney, and one chimney at the Thacker-Cross House (RK 1534) has brick tumbling in the shoulders. The more common fieldstone chimneys exhibit a wide range of stone-laying skill and range from nearly shoulder-less structures to the expertly dry-laid chimneys at the Hugh Challis Stubblefield House. Most fall in the middle with well laid stone, shoulders, and a projecting course at the top creating a cap or cornice.

The eighteenth century hall-parlor plan, consisting of two rooms with no hallway, continued in use across class lines throughout this period, but particularly before 1850. The retention of this plan, however, was not exclusive to Rockingham County. Architectural historian Catherine Bishir offers a description of the entire state in the early nineteenth century,

Rural, conservative society nurtured the full and rich development of a traditional architecture that continued forms, plans, and techniques introduced in the mid-eighteenth century. . . . the familiar open house plans continued to dominate until the 1820s and 1830s. Indeed, the persistence of traditional building patterns among the planter elite as well as yeoman farmers is particularly striking. Many large houses from this period are characterized by room arrangements that provided entrance directly into the main room. Tokens of changing fashion appeared in subtle adjustments of proportion, a trend toward symmetry, and artisans' individualized embellishments from builder's guides.¹¹⁸

The Otway and Sina Bailey House (RK 1512), the Winchester House (RK 1337), and the John Lindsay House (RK 1201) are excellent examples of the persistence of the traditional hall-parlor form. The Baileys were very wealthy, owning twenty-two slaves by 1830, and Sina Bailey, as the daughter of William Bethell, one of the wealthiest men in Rockingham County, certainly would have been exposed to the highest fashion of the day. Yet, in 1821, the Baileys built a hall-parlor house rather than a dwelling with a center hall. The Winchesters, successful farmers near the Midway community, were still clinging to the hall-parlor plan as late as the 1850s. Both the Winchester and Bailey homes illustrated the "inward concentration of display" characteristic of conservative owners who reserved decorative details for the interior.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Catherine Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 52.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 109.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 36

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

John Lindsay built his home on the Dan River during the late 1830s. The sturdy two-story, heavy frame, hall-parlor house is finished with a flat paneled wainscot, eight-panel Federal period doors, and wide Greek Revival mantel pieces, baseboards, and door and window surrounds. Lindsay eventually owned several substantial plantations on the Dan River, including Deep Springs (RK 1015), and in building his house, he accepted some Greek Revival influences, as a landed planter might be expected to, but he retained some Federal period decorations and an eighteenth century plan.

Another house form Rockingham County's antebellum planters commonly used was a two-story single-pile plan with a rear ell that created an L-shaped footprint. Rooms in the front block, the long side of the L, were arranged in either a hall-parlor plan or with a passage separating the two rooms. A one-room ell extended from the rear of one of the front rooms. While this was a common arrangement throughout the nineteenth century, the plan employed by the antebellum upper class was unique because the upstairs room in the ell was accessible only via a small, usually enclosed, secondary stair in the ell; no door originally connected this back room to the front rooms on the upper level. The room was heated and finished, but less well finished than the other upper rooms. It may have been used as the sleeping quarters for servants, as a spare room for visitors, or as part of a scheme to separate the family's sons and daughters at a time when children may have included step children, nieces and nephews, or other orphaned family members.

The plan probably originated in the Middle Atlantic region, where it became a standard layout among the elite by the mid-eighteenth century.¹²⁰ The numerous settlers who came from that area to Rockingham County presumably brought it with them. Examples of its occurrence exist at the fashionable homes of wealthy landowners, such as John Lindsay, John and Lucinda Ellington, Leander Dalton (RK 1144), the McCains of High Rock (RK 3, NR 1974), and Captain William H. Dalton (RK 1185). With the exception of the Dalton House, built in the late 1840s, the other examples date to the 1830s.

Another feature of early nineteenth century houses in Rockingham County often shared by houses in the state is the retention of the open house plan. Open plans feature doors to the exterior from most or all of the first floor rooms. Even in the most formal houses, this system creates an informal air as entry to the house is not restricted or directed through a hall. For some homeowners, doors may also have been a less expensive ventilation and lighting alternative to windows.

During this period, Rockingham County residents, at every economic level, used a limited collection of house forms and plans, including the one-room plan and the one-

¹²⁰ Bernard Herman to author, email, 17 April 2003.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 37

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

room-deep form in a hall-parlor or center-hall plan with a rear ell, occasionally modified as an open plan. To these they applied stylistic elements and fashionable ornamentation as their resources and tastes dictated. Dan River planters were financially able and culturally connected enough to construct high-style Federal homes by the 1820s, although these houses often reflected a statewide tendency among the upper classes to patronize local, often conservative, artisans from their own area and to “build well but with restraint, in a manner that bespoke substance and plenty but not opulence.”¹²¹ Yeoman farmers were likewise able to apply conventional Federal elements to their smaller homes. Though often disregarding symmetry, the best examples display the circular, half-circle, and oval elements and detailed woodwork common to the style in the state’s wealthiest towns and regions. Cascade (RK 1, NR 1970), also known as Willow Oaks, the Fewell-Reynolds House (RK 2, NR 1979), and High Rock (RK 3, 1974) epitomize the most elaborate application of the style in Rockingham County.

In 1811, William Edward Brodnax, patriarch of the county’s most prosperous family, purchased over twenty-six hundred acres on the Dan River in the northeast corner of the county and christened the farm Cascade after a creek on the property. His son, Robert Brodnax, took ownership of the tract in 1820 and enlarged his father’s side-passage house around that time, creating a center-hall plan, five bays wide and two rooms deep.¹²² The use of the side passage plan was not common in Rockingham County. In fact, only three others, two of which date to the mid-1800s and one to the 1890s, are known. The expanded plan is also distinctive because only a small number of double-pile (two-room-deep) dwellings were built in the county before the Civil War. Additional distinction accrues to the transverse hall between the two older rooms, a feature not seen in other Rockingham County houses. The original side passage, which became the center hall, was remodeled to match the addition, but the older rooms retain their transitional Georgian-Federal treatments such as doors with six raised panels, molded but simple chair rails, baseboards, and window and door trim. The mantels are decorated with gouging and reeding typical of the period. In the 1820s rooms and the center hall, however, classical ornamentation abounds in full-blown Federal designs. Among them are Ionic pilasters and colonnettes, acanthus leaf motifs, and classical urns applied to door surrounds and mantels. Gouging, reeding, garlands, round and oval sunbursts, rosettes and dentils trim cornices, door and window surrounds, chair rails, and mantelpieces. Cascade is the county’s Federal masterpiece and ranks as one of the finest Federal houses in the state.

¹²¹ Bishir, *Architecture*, 114.

¹²² Lindley Butler, John Baxton Flowers, III, Nick Pearson, Ruth Little-Stokes. “Cascade Plantation,” National Register Nomination, 1975, section 8, 1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 38

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

A few years later, in the late 1820s, William Fewell built his frame house on the Dan River south of Madison. The Fewell-Reynolds House, with a center-hall plan and a marked verticality to the overall form, displays delicate reeding, sunbursts in cornerblocks and on mantelpieces, fanlights, and elaborately grained wainscoting. A light, open stair ascends three stories into the attic. The house ranks among the most notable Federal houses of the northern Piedmont and among the most important in the state for its interior finishes.¹²³ Despite the fashionable treatment, the house retained an asymmetrical façade with two front doors in the main block.

In the early 1830s, the McCain family built High Rock (RK 3, NR 1974), a monumental, two-story brick house on a full-height basement. Here, too, lavish interior finishes include wainscoting, reeded woodwork, and round and oval sunbursts. Twelve-over-twelve and twelve-over-eight sash windows punctuate the façade and are topped with fanlights and flanked by sidelights. A full-height portico with stuccoed, brick columns and an oval attic light dominates the edifice.

Greek Revival architecture seeped into the local taste as early as the 1830s when some planters began mixing the new style with Federal detailing. John Lindsay's heavy timber frame house (RK 1201) combined decidedly Federal eight-panel doors and a hall-parlor plan with tall Greek Revival baseboards, simple post-and-lintel mantelpieces, and heavy door and window surrounds with cornerblocks. By the 1840s and 1850s, however, a more pure expression of the Greek Revival had become the style of choice for the county's wealthy.

One of the earliest examples of Greek Revival architecture occurs at the ca. 1840 George and Minerva Boyd House (RK 1016) just west of Reidsville. The two-story Boyd house features a central hall with a grand dogleg stair and a plaster ceiling medallion, one of the only examples in the county, set in a recessed rectangular panel. Boyd further modernized his home by removing the original full-height portico and replacing it with a delicate one-story, one-bay porch featuring a cast iron frieze and iron posts. This probably occurred around the time of his remarriage in 1859. Popularly imported from foundries in the north by the planter class farther south, particularly for their town homes in places such as Savannah and Charleston, such ironwork is seen in Rockingham County only at the Boyd House and the now-destroyed Robert Payne Richardson House in Reidsville. Boyd's trading connections probably account for his application of the Greek Revival at an early date and for his awareness of and access to this ironwork. While stylistically ahead of its time within the county in its fashionable woodwork and

¹²³ Parham and Mobley, section 8, 1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 39

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

ironwork, the Boyds' house still acknowledged the old open house plan with doors in three of the four first-floor rooms leading directly to the exterior.

During the 1840s, 1850s, and 1860s, large-scale planters, such as Leander Dalton on Beaver Island Creek, J. S. Wall east of Mayodan, and Thomas Price near Ellisboro built high-style Greek Revival houses. Leander Dalton, a member of the prominent Dalton family, built a two-story, single-pile house in western Rockingham County in 1847. The frame I-house with a rear ell displays simple post and lintel mantels, tall baseboards, plaster walls, and panels beneath the windows in the two main rooms. J. S. Wall's imposing home (RK 1182) is a three-room plan, two-story dwelling with a low-hip roof. Local carpenter James Hall executed the subdued but high-style interior woodwork between 1854 and 1857, and a full-height, gable-front portico with massive brick columns dominates the façade. Thomas Price built a highly unusual home on the eve of the Civil War. Rose Bank (RK 1229), as it was known, is a two-story brick dwelling with a side-passage plan still seen only at two other antebellum houses in the county. The hallway, or side passage, is nearly square and is dominated by an open dogleg staircase. A doorway connects the passage to the west room, behind which is another room. The plan is repeated upstairs. The house also has a kitchen in the basement and a steeply pitched gabled roof with deep eaves, giving one of the county's few existing antebellum nods to the Gothic Revival or Italianate style.

Italianate design is based on elements of Italian Renaissance architecture and most commonly displays deep overhanging eaves, cornices with ornate brackets, heavy hoodmolds above the windows, and occasional square towers.¹²⁴ The most notable Italianate home in the county belonged to Thomas Settle Jr., Associate North Carolina Supreme Court Justice (1868-1871), Minister of Peru under President Grant (1871-1872), candidate for governor (1876), and Federal judge to the Northern District of Florida (1877). Settle inherited his plantation in 1857 from his father, also a politician and planter near Reidsville. The house (RK 1123), an imposing double-pile Downingsque cottage called Mulberry Island, was probably completed just before the outbreak of the Civil War and radically renovated in the 1930s. Despite its symmetrical façade and rectangular footprint, a central projecting gable suggesting a tower (now removed), full-height windows on the first floor façade, and a full-width porch decorated with heavy, bracketed paired posts joined by short spans of sawnwork balustrade created a romantic dwelling. Decorative exposed raftertails trim the deep eaves and small projections edged with

¹²⁴ Catherine Bishir and Michael Southern, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Piedmont North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 539.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 40

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

delicate sawnwork break up the broad side elevations. This same fanciful sawnwork appears on several nearby I-houses built three or four decades later.

Meanwhile, the economic boom that initially provided the most prosperous the means of constructing large, well-finished homes spread to smaller-scale planters who built two-story, single-pile, center-hall houses, also known as I-houses, and occasionally cottages outfitted with Greek Revival treatments of various degrees of sophistication. Before the 1850s, only a handful of houses built for a small number of the very wealthiest planters employed the center-hall I-house form but in the 1850s, the symmetrical, central-passage plan house supplanted the hall-parlor plan. In short, the Greek Revival I-house became the universally accepted standard house type at every economic level where more than one room was affordable. Finished to a level reflecting the builder's resources, these dwellings have low hip or gable roofs and end chimneys. Sometimes, the chimneys rise along the interior hall walls, but for the most part in Rockingham County, chimneys were built on the exterior of the end walls until the later nineteenth century.¹²⁵

Examples of this trend include the I-house with a low hip roof and well-executed but restrained Greek Revival woodwork built by the Willis family in the mid-1800s (RK 1306). Both James Alec Jones (RK 1459) and John and Emily Irvin (RK 1429) started hipped-roof I-houses in the late 1850s or early 1860s, only to complete them after the Civil War. The Jones House lacks the rear ell of the Willis and Irvin houses, but all three typify the simple Greek Revival I-house that was the flagship of the middle-income farmer in the 1850s.

Although middling farmers seem to have accepted the center-hall plan readily as their wealth increased, they did not altogether abandon the hall-parlor and other traditional plans. The John and Chattie Martin House (RK 1145), probably built in the late 1840s, is a one-and-a-half-story coastal plain cottage with a hall-parlor plan and enclosed porch rooms and embellished with Greek Revival elements.¹²⁶ The Carter House (RK 1296) is a two-story frame dwelling with a side-passage plan similar to Rose Bank (RK 1229), Thomas Price's mid-nineteenth century dwelling, but the Carter House's interior is more modest ornamentation with simple tall baseboards, two-panel doors, and flat panels beneath the windows. The earlier section of the Roberts House (RK 1295) dates from around 1856 and has an unusual hall-parlor plan with long narrow rooms running the width of the house, rather than the typically nearly-square rooms created with an interior wall paralleling the gable end walls. A coastal plain cottage roof

¹²⁵ Bishir, *Architecture*, 195.

¹²⁶ Coastal plain cottage is an informal term used to describe a one- or one-and-a-half-story, side-gable dwelling with engaged or inset front and back porches often with one or more enclosed porch rooms. The form is so named because it commonly occurs in North Carolina's coastal plain region.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 41

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

engaging front and rear porches with enclosed porch rooms, makes the Roberts House more unusual. Despite their unique plans, both the Carter House and Roberts House feature the distinctive but modest references to the Greek Revival style typical of the homes built by yeoman farmers of the 1850s.

Outbuildings

Outbuildings were an important part of the rural homestead. In Rockingham County, outbuildings were usually small, single-purpose log or frame buildings arranged in a loose line or courtyard extending back from the rear of the primary dwelling. Outbuildings were an integral part of a farm's operations, but examples built before the Civil War are rare today because they were often removed as farmers' needs changed over time, and therefore properties with more than one antebellum or early nineteenth century outbuilding are scarce. Additionally, the continued use of unadorned log building techniques into the twentieth century makes discerning an early twentieth-century outbuilding from one a hundred years older problematical.

Detached kitchens, smokehouses, granaries, barns for storage and livestock shelter, privies, dairies, and corncribs were probably the most universal outbuildings before the Civil War. Tobacco curing barns were also present, but none are known to date from the first half of the nineteenth century. Generally, food storage buildings and the kitchen stood closest to the main house as part of a loose courtyard extended in a vague U or two parallel lines from the rear of the house. A late nineteenth-century writer described the backyard of the early nineteenth-century Johnston-Stokes House (RK 1506) as having "a quadrangle of negro cabins, with stables on one side, and the kitchen on the other." She also recalled that "a series of stepping stones connected the house and kitchen," which she claimed was detached "just for the sake of not smelling the cooked food."¹²⁷

A smokehouse at the John Lindsay House (RK1201) displays the same heavy frame construction as his home and was probably built at around the same time in the 1830s. The square building has a gable roof and weatherboard siding. A long, low log barn divided into three sections was once part of the Joyce House (RK 1178) complex in the northwest and was probably built in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. A log corncrib and a small double-crib log barn probably built around 1850 are the only remnants of the Sharp Farm (RK 1170) west of Madison.

The Witty Farm (RK 1353), built in the mid-1830s, retains the county's most complete collection of log outbuildings. While the tobacco barn and tobacco packhouse

¹²⁷ Marjorie Craig, "Home-Life in Rockingham County in the 'Eighties and 'Nineties," *North Carolina Historical Review* 4 (October 1956): 525-526.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 42

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

are certainly late nineteenth- or early twentieth-century structures, many of the outbuildings are antebellum. The Wittys' double-pen log barn is one of the largest in Rockingham County and the double-pen log corncrib is unique in the county. Two log smokehouses stand directly behind the house, as does a log kitchen. A second log kitchen was later attached to the rear of the house and numerous other log cribs stand on the property.

While barns, log cribs, kitchens, and smokehouses from the period are scattered about the county, slave housing is particularly rare. Slaveholders were in the minority, but the number of enslaved workers in the county was considerable (6,318 by 1860), and the requisite housing must have been a common feature of the landscape. Certainly some enslaved persons slept in barns or other outbuildings, or in the disconnected rear room of the two-story, single-pile house popular among the planter class, but others would have had their own quarters, most of which, as across the state, have not survived. Dennett made this observation in 1865: "the greater number of houses had around them no Negro quarters at all, while others had two or three cabins, which, in many cases were but little inferior to that occupied by the white family."¹²⁸ Such was the case at Governor Alexander Martin's plantation where the log houses for slaves were similar to those apparently used as guest quarters for other family members.¹²⁹ It is likely that some of the county's slave housing has not been identified as such because it does not differ from the other log houses in the county.

One of the very few confirmed examples of detached slave housing still standing is at the late 1820s McCollum House (RK1351) between Madison and Wentworth. The squat one-room log house is no different from log houses built for whites and has a fieldstone chimney and a loft. Also standing at the McCollum house is a log smokehouse complete with its original trough in which meats were salted for preservation. Several other later nineteenth century log outbuildings also stand on the property.

Churches

The county's growing population and economic resources, as well as waves of evangelicalism that washed across the state throughout the nineteenth century, contributed to church growth. Prior to this construction boom, all known churches except one were housed in log buildings. Previously constrained by the lack of financial resources as well as an adherence to doctrines promoting simple living, self-discipline, and disapproval of privilege, these congregations occupied basic log or frame buildings

¹²⁸ John Richard Dennett, *The South as it Is: 1865-1866* (New York: Viking Press, 1965; reprint, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 103 (page references are to reprint edition).

¹²⁹ North Carolina Writer's Project source material.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 43

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

with no stylistic or religious decorations. As the periodic revivals of the first half of the nineteenth century attracted wealthier members, these evangelical Protestant congregations generally ceased challenging slavery and wealth and began cultivating an image of refinement and respectability, clearly expressed by the Greek Revival temple form. Even Primitive Baptist congregations, known to this day for their simple unadorned buildings, succumbed to the new style. Lick Fork Creek Primitive Baptist (RK 1509), established in 1786, built a new Greek Revival building in the 1850s. Wolf Island Primitive Baptist (RK 1393) also built a Greek Revival sanctuary during this period, but replaced it in 1946. Wentworth Methodist Church (RK 28, NR 1986) followed suit in 1859. Numerous other existing churches adopted this new style and newly organized churches in towns, notably Madison Presbyterian and Wentworth Presbyterian (RK 257), applied the style as well.

War, Recovery, and Modern Industrial Beginnings in Rural and Small-Town Rockingham County: 1861-1900

When the State of North Carolina seceded everything was in a commotion and excitement ran high. . . The fife and drum could be heard in every town and at every crossroads in Rockingham County.

R. S. Williams, captain of Company I, Thirteenth Regiment North
Carolina Troops¹³⁰

Despite Williams's assertion that all of Rockingham County supported secession, with a landed, slave-owning class living along the Dan River and small farmers and industrialists populating the rest of the county, the county was divided much as the state was overall. Rockingham could, in fact, be considered a microcosm of the entire state, reflecting the inner conflicts of a state not entirely invested in the institution of slavery.

A majority of the delegates to a statewide convention held to consider secession were Unionists, as were Rockingham County's delegates, Dr. Edward T. Brodnax and Thomas Settle. Both owned substantial Dan River plantations and the Brodnax family was the county's largest slaveholder, yet both supported the Union. Despite Unionist leanings, for which the county continued to be known even after the war, both the county and state favored proslavery presidential candidate John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky in

¹³⁰ R. S. Williams quoted in Butler, *Rockingham County* 51.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 44

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

the 1860 election and, like the state, once the war began, supplied troops and took steps to support the families left behind.¹³¹

Over 1,700 men from Rockingham County served in the Confederate army, most as part of the thirteenth and forty-fifth regiments, both of which saw action in the battles at Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Spotsylvania Court House, Cold Harbor and Petersburg. Alfred M. Scales achieved the rank brigadier general and was the county's highest ranking officer. Scales, a county native, had been educated at the University of North Carolina, practiced law in Madison and Wentworth, and was elected governor in 1884.¹³²

With the arrival of the railroad, Rockingham County once again had access to a form of transportation not enjoyed by the neighboring counties of Stokes and Caswell. In 1862, the Confederate government chartered the Piedmont Rail Road Company to build a line connecting Greensboro and Danville, Virginia, creating a third route for north-south troop movement. To expedite construction, the easiest route was chosen, with a right-of-way that followed a ridge in the eastern part of the county through Reidsville. The line was completed in May 1864, but the poor state of the Confederacy's railcars meant the fifty-mile trip took five hours.¹³³ Nevertheless, the construction of the rail line was the county's most important Civil War era achievement and left the county well positioned for post-war recovery.

While no battles took place on her soil, Rockingham County, like all of North Carolina, was left in shambles. John Richard Dennett, an observer from England traveling in September 1865, recorded that the county's countryside was "the poorest I have yet seen, with crops that seem less abundant and healthy than those further north."¹³⁴ Additionally, families had lost sons, fathers, husbands, and brothers. Among the many Rockingham County parents who suffered the deaths of multiple soldier sons, George D. Boyd buried three: Samuel, who died at Spotsylvania Court House; John, who died in Richmond, probably of an illness; and George who was killed in the Battle of Gettysburg.¹³⁵

As the county's population looked to economic, emotional, and agricultural recovery, the state government faced the task of acclimating to a new political landscape. In 1866, the state's voters rejected a new state constitution even though it was only slightly different from the 1835 version. Finally, in 1868, in order to rejoin the union, a

¹³¹ Dennett, *South*, 103.

¹³² Rodenbough, *Heritage*, 3, 27-28.

¹³³ Butler, *Rockingham County*, 55.

¹³⁴ Dennett, *South*, 103.

¹³⁵ Butler, *Rockingham County*, 50-52.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 45

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

new constitution was ratified, bringing with it a radically more democratic government. With the exception of atheists, all men over the age of twenty-one could vote, regardless of their religious beliefs, race, or property holdings. Care for those with mental or physical disabilities, orphans, and the poor was mandated, schools for agriculture and mechanics and normal schools were to be established in conjunction with the university, and the creation of public schools was ordered. A woman's property, whether acquired before or after marriage, could not be taken to pay for her husband's debts. Other changes closed or narrowed gaps between women and men, between the wealthy and the poor, and between whites and African Americans.¹³⁶

At the county level, the system of governance by justices was replaced with a board of county commissioners. In traditionally Democratic Rockingham County, the commissioners elected in 1868 were all Republicans and included one African American, Robert Gwynn. Two years later, however, Democrats regained control and one hundred and ten years were to pass before another African American commissioner served the county. With the exception of the 1868 election, when the county supported Republican gubernatorial candidate William Holden, the county continued to be staunchly Democratic during Reconstruction.¹³⁷

Despite the county's Democratic leanings, its most prominent citizen in the post-war years was Thomas Settle Jr., a wealthy Dan River planter who helped establish the state's Republican party. Settle's political accomplishments were numerous. He was elected to the state senate where he served as speaker before being elected to the state supreme court. He served as United States minister to Peru in 1871, but resigned within a year citing health problems. The following year he presided over the Republican National Convention. Also in the 1870s, he lost a congressional race and a campaign against Zebulon B. Vance for governor. He was later appointed to the position of federal district judge in Florida.¹³⁸

Rockingham County, like the rest of the state, saw the Ku Klux Klan gain a foothold during Reconstruction. In 1868 and 1869, the Klan was particularly active, threatening and terrorizing African Americans and whites who attempted to help African Americans realize full citizenship or merely showed sympathy towards them. African American men and women were beaten and abused and at least one lynching occurred. Klansmen dogged Thomas Settle Jr., burning crosses on his plantation and plotting his assassination. Although a superior court judge convened a special term of court to hear a case against twenty Klansmen, none were convicted and the activities of the Klansmen

¹³⁶ Powell, *North Carolina*, 392-393.

¹³⁷ Butler, *Rockingham County*, 56.

¹³⁸ Rodenbough, *Heritage*, 553.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 46

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

generally went unchecked. In 1870, state and federal efforts, combined locally with the denunciation of the Klan by Settle and his cousin, former Governor and Democrat David S. Reid, ended the Klan's overt activities in the county.¹³⁹

Prosperity Rides the Rails to Rockingham County

In the late 1800s, industrial investors, particularly those in New England, began to realize that farmers in the South were eager to trade tenancy for a regular paycheck and would readily accept low-wage factory jobs. Building factories near the raw material, in particular cotton, would also lower production costs, but the movement of mills to rural areas was not feasible until railroads were built. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, however, the necessary rail lines were in place and textile mills sprung up all over the South, especially in the Piedmont regions of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. Mill developers and politicians heralded the arrival of railroads and the industry that followed as the foundation of the New South upon which an improved and less agrarian society would be built and across the region, including Rockingham County.

By the end of 1883, a narrow-gauge rail line connected Leaksville and Danville, Virginia. In 1889, a branch line of the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railway, which connected Mount Airy and Wilmington, reached Madison by way of Stokesdale in northwest Guilford County. The Roanoke and Southern Railway, however, completed in 1891 linking Winston-Salem and Roanoke, Virginia, via Madison and Stoneville, was the county's most important post-war rail project because it stimulated use of the Mayo River as the power for Mayo Mills, Rockingham County's first large-scale rural industrial facility. With many rail connections, Rockingham County seemed fertile ground for New South urbanization, commerce, and industry.¹⁴⁰

While railroads fostered commerce and industry, they also facilitated the import of ideas and a greater sense of sophistication. One Wentworth merchant returned from regular trips north with "a breath of the outside world" and "new-fangled" products for his store. In 1876, he was part of a large party that attended the country's centennial celebrations in Philadelphia.¹⁴¹ Rail excursions from Reidsville, Madison, and Leaksville regularly took both African American and white riders to Winston and Danville to shop, see "Barnum's Great Show," or just enjoy the sights of a different locale. One ad read, "An Excursion will leave here [Reidsville] next Saturday morning at 7 o'clock a.m. for

¹³⁹ Rodenbough, *Heritage* 34 and Butler, *Rockingham County*, 57.

¹⁴⁰ Butler, *Rockingham County*, 61-62; 65.

¹⁴¹ Craig, "Home-life," 520.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 47

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Winston. Fare round trip \$1.50. There will be three coaches for colored people. A pleasant time is expected. The band will go.”¹⁴²

Despite having seen a population decrease between 1860 and 1870, the county’s population grew in the years following 1870 as existing towns matured and new communities flourished, especially those on the railroads. In the 1870s, the General Assembly incorporated Reidsville, Leaksville, Stoneville, and Madison. Ruffin, also benefiting from rail lines, followed in 1887.

The Growth of Towns

In September 1865, when British traveler John Richard Dennett passed through Reidsville he noted the presence of only a small railroad way station and one store selling liquor.¹⁴³ Had he arrived five years later, he would have found a more substantial place. The Piedmont Railroad was chartered in 1862 and completed through Reidsville in 1864.¹⁴⁴ The line proved a magnet for business and provided the impetus for Reidsville to emerge as one of the leading tobacco production centers in the state. Most of the county’s tobacco was processed in rural factories, but after the war, the importance of the railroad as a market tool was a strong attraction and factories moved from the farms to Reidsville to be near its rail line.

In 1866, Major Mortimer Oaks came to the town and opened the Piedmont Hotel in a substantial three-story frame building. He also owned one of the earliest tobacco warehouses and factories. In addition to relocated factories, warehouses for selling and storing tobacco sprang up in Reidsville, as did prizeries where tobacco was packed (or prized) into crates for shipment. By 1870, just five years after Dennett saw so little activity, the town was bustling with factories, a hotel, merchants, shoemakers, wheelwrights, a harness maker, schoolteachers, and three physicians. In the early 1870s, more businesses opened, including a photography studio and a prizery owned by an African American. Two schools and a Masonic lodge were established.¹⁴⁵

In 1874 F.R. and S.C. Penn established a tobacco manufacturing company that produced smoking and chewing tobacco. A few years later, in 1877, Robert P. Richardson Jr., started a factory that produced smoking tobacco sold under the brand name Old North State. Its success brought more manufacturers to Reidsville and by 1890, eight plug factories and three smoking tobacco factories were processing over four

¹⁴² *Webster’s Dollar Weekly* (Reidsville), 19 July 1881; *Dan Valley Echo* (Leaksville) and the *Reidsville Times* various advertisements in both, 1880s and 1890s.

¹⁴³ Dennett, *South*, 103.

¹⁴⁴ Southern Railway absorbed this line in 1894.

¹⁴⁵ Butler, *Rockingham County*, 58-59.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 48

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

million pounds of tobacco and employing eighteen hundred people.¹⁴⁶ During the late 1800s, Reidsville was generally third in smoking tobacco production, after Durham and Winston.¹⁴⁷

Leaksville also enjoyed post-war growth, particularly after the arrival of the narrow gauge rail line to Danville, Virginia in 1883 sparked a population increase of nearly three-fold. By 1884, six sawmills, five gristmills, five tobacco factories, one cabinet shop, three wagon and buggy shops, one woolen mill, and one foundry had been established in addition to Morehead's textile factory that began operating in 1839.¹⁴⁸ Based on advertisements in the Leaksville newspaper, the *Dan Valley Echo*, fabric, notions, hardware stores, physicians, drug stores, ready-made clothing, tobacco-specific fertilizers, restaurants, dentists, and grocers selling everything from fish and oysters to candy were available to Leaksville's residents and visitors. In the spring of 1886, plans were under way to organize a local bank.¹⁴⁹ The town quickly became a tobacco market and eight plug tobacco factories operated there by 1893.¹⁵⁰ With increased industrial activity and a growing population, more banks, stores, and other services opened to meet Leaksville's expanding needs.

In 1866, James Turner Morehead moved to Leaksville from Greensboro to oversee the industrial operations his father, John Motley Morehead, had established in the 1830s. He expanded and improved the Leaksville Factory and employed both African American and white men, women, and children.¹⁵¹ In 1889, the complex was incorporated as the Spray Water Power and Land Company, which took its name from the splashing water coming off the waterwheel. When Morehead requested a post office for the community, he first used the name "Splashy" but residents protested and he submitted Spray. Morehead oversaw the construction of a second canal, which allowed for expansion that accelerated in the 1890s after Frank Mebane, Morehead's son-in-law, became president of Spray Water and Power Company. By the late 1890s, under Mebane's direction, the canals on the Smith River were powering the Leaksville Cotton Mill's 400 looms, Spray Cotton Mill's 12,064 spindles, Leaksville Woolen Mill, and Nantucket Mill's 400 looms.¹⁵²

While Leaksville and Reidsville prospered from their rail connections,

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 60.

¹⁴⁷ Tilley, *Bright-Tobacco*, 547, 563.

¹⁴⁸ *Sketches of the County of Rockingham*, 5.

¹⁴⁹ *Dan Valley Echo* (Leaksville), 15 April 1886, 4.

¹⁵⁰ Butler, *Rockingham County*, 60.

¹⁵¹ *Dan Valley Echo* (Leaksville), 8 May 1885, 3.

¹⁵² Eden Historic Preservation Commission and Brown, *Three Cities*, 19-20.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 49

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Madison remained dependent on river transportation. Federally funded improvements to the Dan River, including the construction of rock wing dams and sluices, kept river travel viable and batteaux continued to ply the river into the 1880s.¹⁵³ By 1891, however, when the Roanoke and Southern Railroad arrived in Madison, much of the town's tobacco manufacturing had relocated to Reidsville, but the town's tobacco market remained central to the local economy. By 1898, three tobacco leaf houses, two tobacco warehouses and one plug tobacco factory operated. Other businesses included two hotels, eight general stores, two cabinetmakers, a newspaper, livery stables, a harness and jewelry store, a blacksmith, an icehouse, a furniture store, a hardware store, and a restaurant. In 1899, the Bank of Madison was formed. African Americans set up barbershops, restaurants, and other businesses by 1900.¹⁵⁴

Wentworth remained important as the county's governmental seat. In 1881, one of the largest public building projects in the county was completed when the new courthouse was opened. Without river or rail access, however, Wentworth did not experience the industrial or commercial expansion and subsequent residential growth that some of the county's other towns enjoyed.

Although Ruffin was not incorporated until 1887, its formation began in the mid-nineteenth century as a post office at the intersection of Perkins Ferry Road and the stage route between Danville and Greensboro. Initially called Little Rock and then Stacyville, the settlement was renamed Ruffin in 1869 in honor of Chief Justice Thomas Ruffin, who owned a Rockingham County plantation. When the Piedmont Railroad came through the community during the Civil War, Ruffin was home to two or three stores, a stage shop, a tavern, and a tobacco factory. At the end of the war, Ruffin was larger than Reidsville and became a late nineteenth-century trading center for northeastern Rockingham and northwestern Caswell counties. By the late 1800s, Ruffin was bustling with tobacco factories, merchants, a hotel, saloons, and physicians.¹⁵⁵

In the late 1880s, business leaders in Winston and Salem organized the Roanoke and Southern Railway (later absorbed by Norfolk and Western), which would become one of the county's economic engines of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Francis Fries surveyed and plotted the line's path. His route followed the Dan River to Madison and then turned north, following the Mayo River. As he worked, Fries could not help but notice the Mayo's potential for power generation as it made a rapid descent at Cedar Point Mountain, just north of its junction with the Dan. The railroad was

¹⁵³ *Sketches of the County of Rockingham*, 17

¹⁵⁴ Butler, *Rockingham County*, 66.

¹⁵⁵ Rodenbough, *Heritage*, 127-128.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 50

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

completed in 1891 and by 1892 Fries had organized a company to build a mill along the Mayo River.

Fries, partnered with William C. Ruffin of Rocky Mount and Washington Duke of Durham, purchased land from farmer Robert Lewis. The men built a dam, canal, and mill building and Mayo Mills began operating in 1896. The investors also organized the Piedmont Land Company to develop a mill village, which was named Mayodan for the nearby confluence of the Mayo and Dan rivers. While the mill owned most of the residential lots, the land company sold commercial lots and residential lots to those wishing to operate businesses in the village.¹⁵⁶

Mayodan grew rapidly in a rugged and rural locale. The local depot agent described it as “a wildwoods wilderness, as dark as darkest Africa.”¹⁵⁷ Some of Mayodan’s residents, particularly merchants, were from Winston or Virginia, but the mill hands were drawn nearly exclusively from the county’s northwestern corner and from northeast Stokes County where tilling the steep and rocky slopes made farming a less-than-profitable endeavor. Urban conveniences were quick to occupy the business district and by 1897, Mayodan merchants had erected stores and residents could attend either Moravian or Episcopal church services. Eliza Higgins opened a boarding house and children could attend school at the Moravian Church.¹⁵⁸

With Mayo Mills successfully operating, Fries and Ruffin built another mill two miles up the river. Waterwheels generating twelve hundred horsepower ran the Avalon Mill, completed in 1899. Here, a village, this one of about sixty houses, accompanied the mill, but the enterprise was doomed. On June 15, 1911, the mill burned to the ground. Fries and Ruffin did not rebuild, but expanded the operations of the Mayo Mills and over a two-year period moved many Avalon workers and their houses to Mayodan. Mayo Mills continued to use Avalon’s dam as part of its power generation system until 1968.¹⁵⁹

The rail line serving Mayodan and Avalon also sparked growth in Price and, especially, Stoneville, where a hotel and restaurants catered to travelers and new tobacco warehouses and factories were built while old ones expanded. As in the other towns, banks, shops, and other commercial operations flourished.¹⁶⁰

In addition to urban industrial activities, smaller enterprises continued to operate in rural areas. In the 1880s, most townships had at least three water-powered gristmills.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 131.

¹⁵⁷ Station agent, John E. Dempster quoted in Rodenbough, *Heritage*, 131.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 131-132.

¹⁵⁹ Butler, *Rockingham County*, 66.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. Stoneville was devastated by a tornado on March 20, 1998. Many downtown buildings were badly damaged or destroyed. The depot, the oldest standing in the county, was one of the architectural losses.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 51

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Additionally, stores, tobacco factories, and blacksmiths served and employed the rural population. Mining operations extracted coal, iron ore, graphite, soapstone, sandstone, and mica. It was also recorded that “bateaux ply frequently from Madison to Danville, Virginia.”¹⁶¹ Near the end of the century, R. P. Richardson Jr. ran a tomato-canning factory in a two-story frame building (RK 1517) south of Ruffin in the Lawsonville community.¹⁶²

Education

Although North Carolina’s public school system was regarded as the best in the South before the Civil War, in the years following the conflict, public schools were again almost nonexistent. Of the 5,551 school age children in Rockingham County in 1870, only 322 white children and thirty-five African American children (six percent of the total school age population) attended public school.¹⁶³ Obviously, most of the county’s children went uneducated, but private schools offered options to some. Academies for boys and girls operated in Reidsville, Leaksville, and Madison. Wentworth and Stoneville each had one academy and two more operated in the countryside near Wentworth. Another school was conducted at Mt. Herman Church.¹⁶⁴ The earliest public school for African Americans opened in Madison in 1870; by 1877 there also were ten private schools for African American students. Presumably those thirty-five African Americans attending public school in 1870 made up the student body of the school in Madison.¹⁶⁵

The state’s public education system remained neglected during Reconstruction, but the situation gradually improved. In Rockingham County, by 1877 there were 4,155 white and 2,540 African American school age children. The county had forty-two public school buildings: thirty-three for white children and nine for African American children. Had the entire school age population been enrolled and attended school, the small one-room schools would have had over one hundred students per building. Obviously, while the number of schools had risen and progress was being made, few students were actually attending school. Meanwhile, private academies continued to play an important role in education.¹⁶⁶

Most schools were log or frame one-room buildings. One late nineteenth-century pupil described her school as a log cabin behind Salem Methodist Church. Students sat

¹⁶¹ *Sketches of the County of Rockingham*, 5, 17.

¹⁶² Carter interview.

¹⁶³ United States Census, 1870.

¹⁶⁴ Butler, *Rockingham County*, 69, and various newspaper advertisements in the 1870s.

¹⁶⁵ Butler, *Rockingham County*, 69.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 52

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

on backless benches made of split logs and shared a writing desk, which was a polished board extending across the back of the room under the main window. A wide fireplace heated the room in which one teacher instructed students in grades one through seven.¹⁶⁷

The number of schools operating seems satisfactory for the white population, but in 1881 only three grades were offered in public schools and the school term was only thirteen and one-half weeks long. County funding for the system was inadequate and in 1882, when teachers protested the county's failure to pay sufficient salaries and support teacher training, superintendent N.S. Smith resigned in solidarity with the protesters. Smith was reinstated by order of the state's attorney general and funding eventually increased so that Smith began offering teachers' institutes for both African American and white instructors at various locations around the county.¹⁶⁸ In 1885, for example, two were held: one for white teachers on July 6 in Wentworth and one for black instructors on August 10 in Leaksville.¹⁶⁹

Despite some advances, the provision of schools remained sporadic and uneven. While one resident of the Mayfield community said the woods were full of schools in his area, African Americans in Leaksville were not so fortunate. In 1886, one group of citizens appealed to the school board via the newspaper: "We, the colored people of Leaksville, have been deprived of a public school for two years in succession on account of having no place for school there being no schoolhouse for the colored prepared yet." The group went on to ask the board to "look at our case and do something in the future for us."¹⁷⁰

By 1886, the county appropriated approximately \$1.40 per child for public schooling.¹⁷¹ Nearly five thousand white pupils were enrolled and nearly four thousand African American students were on the rosters. In 1890, forty-four percent of the school age white children was enrolled in public schools. Forty-five percent of the African American school age population was enrolled.¹⁷²

Although the need for public education for both races gained more attention in the late 1800s, private schools remained important. The Leaksville Practical High School for Males and Females advertised a twenty-week term in 1886 during which students could study various levels of English, music, Latin, or bookkeeping for tuition ranging from

¹⁶⁷ Craig, "Home-life," 524.

¹⁶⁸ Butler, *Rockingham County*, 70.

¹⁶⁹ *Dan Valley Echo* (Leaksville), 16 April 1885, 4.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 15 April 1886, 4.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 16 December 1886, 2.

¹⁷² United States Census, Population Returns, 1890.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 53

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

twenty dollars per term for Advanced English to only five dollars for bookkeeping.¹⁷³ Reidsville Seminary began operations by the 1880s. Advertisements for private schools in Milton and Hillsborough, as well as ads for the University of North Carolina ran in the *Reidsville Times* throughout the late 1800s.¹⁷⁴

Religion

With economic recovery underway and urban centers developing, the growing population established numerous churches, predominantly of the same denominations represented in the county one hundred years earlier. Between 1872 and 1890, the number of churches doubled from twenty-two to forty-five.¹⁷⁵ Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, and Episcopalians founded new churches in Reidsville. The Baptists formed an additional church in Madison, and in Leaksville existing congregations grew and constructed new sanctuaries. Similarly, in rural locations, new churches organized and existing churches, such as Lowes United Methodist Church, built new sanctuaries.¹⁷⁶

African American worshipers broke from white churches and began founding their own congregations after the war. Reidsville's African Americans organized a Baptist church in 1874 and Saint Paul Methodist Church in 1890. Saint John's Methodist Church and Mt. Sinai served Leaksville's African Americans. In Madison, the first post-Civil War African American church was a nondenominational Union Church. Saint Stephens Methodist Church came into being in the late 1880s and splintered into a second church in the early 1900s while Beulah Baptist formed around 1890.

In the new town of Mayodan, religious leanings followed those of the town's founders, many of whom were Moravians from Salem. Francis Fries and the other men overseeing the construction of the railroad along the Mayo River held Moravian services for themselves and the construction workers. When Mayodan was established, several former railroad builders stayed. Among them were Howard E. Rondthaler, the primary lay minister during the railroad construction, and Samuel P. Tesh, a Salemite and Mayodan's first merchant. These two men conducted services in various locations around town until a sanctuary was completed in 1896. In 1898, the first public school in Mayodan operated there and in the early 1900s, the congregation organized a missionary church in Avalon. Also in the late 1800s, Episcopalians formed a congregation in Mayodan.

¹⁷³ *Dan Valley Echo* (Leaksville), 15 April 1886, 1.

¹⁷⁴ *Reidsville Times*.

¹⁷⁵ North Carolina Writers Project source material.

¹⁷⁶ *Reidsville Times*, 18 October 1883.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 54

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Agriculture

While the abolition of slavery altered the means through which crops were raised in North Carolina, agricultural production eventually rebounded and matched or exceeded pre-war quantities in the late nineteenth century. In 1860, North Carolina farms produced 145,000 bales of cotton and 33,000,000 pounds of tobacco. By 1880, farmers harvested 390,000 bales of cotton, although the tobacco yield had declined almost twenty percent to 27,000,000 pounds, but these figures rose as farms grew in number, although their average size shrank. Without slave labor, large farms became more expensive to operate and many planters divided their lands. Correspondingly, there were 225,000 farms in the state by 1900 averaging 101 acres in size whereas in 1860, there had been only 72,203 farms averaging 316 acres. While a greater number of farmers owned the land they worked and were producing more, the farming economy was not faring well. By 1880, tenants operated more than one-third of the state's farms, which fostered poverty, soil depletion, reduced per-acre production, and a reliance on a one- or two-crop system.¹⁷⁷

With the loss of enslaved workers many farmers turned first to hired hands and then to tenants. Peter Hairston, a tobacco planter with significant landholdings in Virginia and in Rockingham and Stokes counties in North Carolina, switched from laborers to tenants between 1878 and 1883. Money was behind this change. As higher-wage industrial opportunities became available, large farm owners turned to tenancy in lieu of competitive pay, which they could not or would not offer. Small farmers turned to their family members for needed labor.¹⁷⁸

Tenancy on tobacco farms started during the 1700s, but did not become a major component of standard agricultural practices until the post-Civil War period. Tobacco and cotton in particular lent themselves to tenancy. Because they are cash crops, merchants were willing to use them as collateral and landowners were willing to use them as rent. In proportion to their value, they are also small in bulk, making transportation and storage easier. They produce a high per-acre income, are non-perishable, and are sold immediately after harvest for easy and quick claims settlement, and they can't be eaten or easily destroyed. Generally, one of three agreements was used between owner and tenant: The landowner received one-quarter of the crop and provided land, wood, buildings, and one-quarter of the fertilizer; the landowner received half the crop and provided land, feed, wood, buildings, teams of work animals, tools, and half the fertilizer; or the landowner received half the crop and provided the land, seed, wood, and all necessary fertilizer.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ Powell, *North Carolina*, 417.

¹⁷⁸ Tilley, *Bright-Tobacco*, 97-98.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 93, 102.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 55

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Along with labor, other farming costs were substantial and produced a cycle of debt. Transporting farm products to markets (where farmers were at the mercy of the buyers) remained expensive and difficult, interest rates were high, and farm supplies were costly. Local merchants who sold to farmers on credit required payment in cash crops. This perpetuated the farmer's investment in a limited number of crops, predominantly non-food items, which in turn, furthered his dependence on merchants for food. To generate more cash, farmers overproduced, which drove prices lower, which prompted more production, and so on. Crops from the western territories as well as from other countries created lower agricultural prices worldwide.¹⁸⁰

The system of tenancy and debt had Caswell County farmers lamenting in 1886 that farmers had to live entirely on credit.¹⁸¹ In 1886, the *Progressive Farmer* warned readers to stop tobacco from robbing the smokehouse, corncribs, and stock barns.¹⁸² Without a doubt tenancy fostered adherence to the single-crop system and discouraged growing foodstuffs, effective crop rotation, or producing feed and fodder for livestock. But with hard clay soil under their feet, the farmers of Rockingham County had little choice. They grew the one crop that actually preferred seemingly barren dirt and the system, even with all its pitfalls, brought a measure of general prosperity in the late 1800s. Wrote one observer in 1892, "Twenty-five years ago some of the poorest regions in what now constitute the yellow tobacco belt of North Carolina offered a scant living to the poor inhabitants dwelling in huts amid uninviting surroundings. But yellow tobacco came, and lo! what a change."¹⁸³

Another important change in agriculture occurred in 1879 when the General Assembly passed an act authorizing counties or individual townships to prevent livestock from roaming free by allowing farmers to fence in their land. In 1883, Rockingham County had not enacted the law and some citizens began agitating for a vote. George D. Boyd's letter to the *Reidsville Times* argued that the time had come to vote, at least in some townships, if not in the county as a whole. If, however, the stock law could not be enacted in Rockingham County, Boyd encouraged land owners to take advantage of a clause in the act which allowed contiguous landowners to build a common fence around their property, with gates across public roads, prohibiting the free range grazing of both the landowners' livestock as well as that of their neighbors. He suggested that if townships or landowners would build fences, all would see the advantages and the entire

¹⁸⁰ Powell, *North Carolina*, 418, 422.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 106.

¹⁸² *Progressive Farmer*, 14 April 1886.

¹⁸³ *Gold Leaf*, 4 August 1892.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 56

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

county would enact the law.¹⁸⁴ The *Dan Valley Echo* concurred, editorializing that a stock law would foster greater corn production.¹⁸⁵ In the fall of 1884, Oregon Township heeded Boyd's advice and the township's commissioners hired contractors to encircle the entire township with a fence. After only ten or twelve days' worth of work on the Oregon fence, the county as a whole passed the stock law and work ceased.¹⁸⁶

Although a seemingly small change, fence construction left poorer farmers with less opportunity to raise healthy livestock. With stock fenced in, the farmer had to provide all the necessary feed for his animals. Like the single-crop system, this development increased the farmer's dependence on cash for "store bought" feed.

Tobacco remained king in Rockingham County as the changes in the curing process developed in the 1830s began to take hold. Flue curing, which consistently produced the bright-leaf, was perfected and became the standard curing method in the early 1870s. In the 1860s and 1870s, improvements to tobacco seeds were ongoing and publications such as Robert L. Ragland's *The Tobacco Planter's Friend* disseminated information about new farming methods. James B. Duke and R. J. Reynolds began operating large-scale tobacco factories in the 1870s in Durham and Winston, respectively, and Danville, Virginia continued to grow as a market. With such strong markets readily accessible by rail, Rockingham County farmers were further encouraged to produce more tobacco and demand only increased with the introduction of the cigarette rolling machine in 1884.¹⁸⁷

Architecture Outside Madison, Reidsville, Leaksville, and Spray

The Civil War nearly halted construction in Rockingham County. Numerous soldiers who had started building Greek Revival I-houses and smaller log houses completed those after the war, but generally the war's aftermath kept building to a minimum. Fortunately, the county's operational rail line and established textile factory spurred recovery. In Reidsville, tobacco factories, shops, and the three-story Piedmont Hotel built by newly arrived promoter and entrepreneur Major Mortimer Oaks were in operation by 1870. Small houses for mill hands and handsome homes for business owners and mill managers were built, particularly in the last two decades of the century as tobacco manufacturing boomed. The Civil War had not interrupted production at Leaksville Factory (later Spray) and under James Turner Morehead's leadership,

¹⁸⁴ *Reidsville Times*, 29 November 1883.

¹⁸⁵ *Dan Valley Echo* (Leaskville), 8 May 1885, 3.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁸⁷ Brooks, *Bright Leaf*, 22-24.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 57

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

expansion and construction continued. Recovery in Leaksville and Madison was somewhat hampered because the first trains did not arrive in those towns until 1883 and 1891, but countywide, mass-produced, standardized building materials became available as more railroads crossed the county while pattern books and magazines filled with ideas and designs for houses for a range of budgets were accessible for most of the county's residents.

It is during this period that differences between the architectural tastes of the rural citizen and those of the town dweller emerged. Prior to the Civil War, the rural house and the urban house were about equal in their stylishness: a house in one locale was not likely to be any more or less fashionable than a house built in the other setting by members of a similar social rank. After the war, however, rural house and church builders held on to antebellum aesthetics and ceased or slowed accepting nationally or regionally popular trends while people living in towns, except for those in mill housing, tended to keep up with architectural changes. This gap widened further in the first half of the twentieth century.

The I-house was the dominant form of the late nineteenth century and I-houses seem to occur by the thousands in rural Rockingham County. Well into the 1870s and early 1880s, farmers continued to build the I-houses popularized in the 1850s, with low hip roofs and subdued Greek Revival ornament. Changes to I-house treatments did not begin until the later 1880s and 1890s when the side-gable roof returned and the application of a centered gable on the front roof slope gave a faint bow to the Gothic Revival. Full or nearly full-width porches were almost always present and entrances often comprised some combination of sidelights, a transom, and a door or double doors with a glazed panel. Chimneys remained on the exterior gable ends and were still often built of fieldstone, but brick became increasingly common and brick chimneys occasionally rose in the center of the house, flanking the center hall.

On these rural I-houses, references to the Queen Anne and Italianate styles popular in Rockingham County's growing towns were usually greatly restrained. Sawntwork appeared in gable ends and as brackets on porch posts. Decorative shingles embellished gable ends, but rarely any other part of the house. Windows continued to have six-over-six-light sash, although by the very end of the nineteenth century, two-over-two sash windows became more common. Additionally, the I-house form was retained and the asymmetrical massing, characteristic of Queen Anne designs, never made its way into the countryside.

A few rare examples of more exuberant applications of late nineteenth-century decorations are found in rural settings. The Wariner House (RK 1525) south of Ruffin is abundantly decorated but less sophisticated in its form than houses built in the county's

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 58

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

towns during the late 1800s. Unlike the asymmetrically-massed Queen Anne houses in the county's towns, the Wariner House is a simple I-house form adorned with elaborate and plentiful sawnwork and spindlework. Decorative shingles cover the gable ends, and sawnwork brackets and turned posts enrich the full-width front porch.

Two small cottages illustrate rural Queen Anne treatments in the one-story form. In southern Rockingham County the Garrison House (RK 1219) is an exemplary late nineteenth-century cottage. Twin gables punctuate the side-gable roof and each gable end is covered with decorative shingles. Weatherboards cover the exterior and a small porch with turned posts and sawnwork brackets shelters the front elevation. Just north of Reidsville, an even more exuberant Italianate dwelling, the William Henry Schoolfield House (RK 1424) faces Business U.S. Highway 29. Like the Garrison House, it has two gables on the front roof slope, but vigorous bracketing in the deep eaves and substantial turned posts produce a more high-style cottage.

Despite these examples, however, the gap between rural and more urban architecture remains apparent even when rural buildings are compared to those in the county's smaller towns. Two or three high-style, one-story, Queen Anne cottages, presumably the homes or merchants or mill officials, interrupt the rows of plain L-shaped mill cottages along Mayodan's streets. In Stoneville, the C. P. and Ruby Robertson House (RK 1205) is a stylish Queen Anne house dating from the 1890s. The two-story asymmetrically-massed dwelling features a nearly pyramidal roof with gabled projections on three elevations, each embellished with sawnwork and delicate spindlework trim. Tuscan columns support the wrap-around porch, which also bows out slightly on the west elevation.

Although it did not hit its stride until the early twentieth century, an extremely common building practice has its roots in the late 1800s. With amazing frequency, particularly in the eastern and southern sections of the county, farmers living in single-pen log houses created I-houses by building around their one-room dwelling. As the home's owner became more prosperous, he or she could attach a frame hallway and second room to one side of the original log house and then construct a second story across the entire building. Telltale signs of this treatment include a second front door, thick walls in one room, and a chimney constructed of fieldstone to about two-thirds of its height and finished with brick. The chimney on the opposite side of the house is usually entirely brick unless the original house had been a dogtrot, in which case the overbuilding consisted only of enclosing the open passage and adding the full second story.

Log construction continued to the end of the nineteenth century. Prior to the war, log houses were built on the same scale with the same floor plans and often the same

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 59

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

level of finish as their frame contemporaries. After the war, as frame construction became cheaper, log construction was relegated to the poor farmer and to farm buildings. Log homes of the late 1800s were nearly all single-pen units more quickly and crudely assembled than the carefully constructed and highly finished log houses of the earlier 1800s. The building method did, however, retain the desirable trait of economy and the flexibility that had always allowed it to be finished to a higher level or expanded as the owner's means increased.

Outbuildings from this period survive in greater numbers than those built before the Civil War. Double-crib log barns were still built, although more single-crib examples survive. Smokehouses were most often built of log while corncribs and "nubbin" cribs, used to store the less desirable, damaged, broken, or small corncobs that were fed to swine, were numerous. Tobacco curing barns and tobacco packhouses also became more common as more farmers turned to the cash crop and its pre-auction processing became more refined. Kitchens were still detached from the main house, but the two buildings were usually connected by an open breezeway, which was eventually enclosed at most homes.

The practice of building small single-purpose structures intensified during the period. With the exception of privies and dairies, most outbuildings were log, and that continued to be the case, but small frame structures with even more specific functions not seen in the existing earlier building stock, became common during this time. Well houses, wash houses, woodsheds, brooding houses for hens, canning or can houses in which canned goods were stored, and potting sheds for flower-growers introduce themselves to the standard quadrangle of outbuildings.

An excellent collection of outbuildings stands behind the Rob Benton Joyce House (RK1156) near the Ayersville community. Numerous outbuildings are scattered across the property, but a distinctive line close to the rear of the house includes small, frame, single-purpose buildings. The largest is the gable-front wash house with a central door flanked by six-over-six sash windows. Immediately adjacent is the milk house, also sometimes called a dairy. This tiny frame building has a simple shed roof and batten door. Beside the milk house stands the potting house, which is a slightly larger version of the milk house. On this farm, the smokehouse is frame and is called a curing house, which is a more accurate term as smokehouses were usually not used for smoking meat, but for storing salt-cured meat. Unlike most nineteenth-century corncribs in Rockingham County which were log, the Joyce crib is a frame structure covered with wooden slats. Almost identical to the milk house, the privy stands relatively far from the house and the food storage buildings. A frame tobacco packhouse, early twentieth-century sheds, and log tobacco barns also dot the property, but at a farther distance from the house.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 60

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Churches' responses to post-war architectural tastes paralleled residential architecture of the period. Rural churches rarely applied full-blown Queen Anne, Gothic Revival, or Italianate styles; the most stylish examples are found in the towns. In addition, few rural church buildings date from this period, partly because the population was moving towards the industrializing towns and because the church building-boom of the antebellum years seems to have provided adequate space for the post-war rural congregations. The Moravian Church (RK 1469) in Mayodan used Gothic Revival elements, such as Gothic-arched windows and a corner tower to accent their frame church building, which was subsequently covered in brick veneer to bring it more in line with traditional Moravian design. In Stoneville, the Christian Church (RK 1263) constructed a frame, cross-gable building with a steeply pitched roof and bell tower.

Three post-Civil War log school buildings stand in the county. The 1880s Grassy Springs School was relocated to the Rockingham Community College campus (RK 1581). The heavily restored Bason School (RK 1582) stands near New Lebanon Church in the Bethany vicinity, and Mountain Oak School is located behind a house near Baker's Crossroads.

Probably the largest building project of the late 1800s was the construction of a new courthouse. By the post-war period, the brick courthouse, which replaced the original in 1823, was too small and in 1881, a new brick building was built around it. Although it burned in 1906, documentary photographs record a stuccoed brick building with bold paneled pilasters, quoins around the windows, a rusticated ground floor, and a square copula decorated by small eave brackets, paneled pilasters, and arched vents. While the building was Italianate in overall style, its incorporation of Greek Revival features created a façade noticeably similar to Goldsboro's Greek Revival First Presbyterian Church, constructed in 1855. The use of the Italianate style illustrated the progressive thinking of the county's leaders at a time when industry and the railroads were bringing a new urban prosperity to the county, but its Greek Revival references exemplify the trend for that style to remain fashionable in Rockingham County well into the late 1800s.

Textile mills and tobacco factories housed in modern brick buildings had become commonplace in Leaksville, Spray, and Reidsville by the time two major rural mill construction projects occurred in Rockingham County. Completed in 1896, Mayo Mills was a long brick building standing between the Mayo River and the tracks of the Norfolk and Western Railway, formerly Roanoke and Southern Railway. The three-story building had arched windows and a five-story tower on the west elevation. Two narrow towers stood on the east elevation. In the early 1900s, Mayo Mills was nearly doubled in size by an addition similar to original section, but without towers. The larger tower on the west

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 61

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

elevation was removed or shortened and subsequently hidden by additions, but the mill's original east elevation remains intact. Just to the north, the Avalon Mill was four-stories and brick, and like the Mayo, adhered to the prescribed construction plans for late nineteenth century mills, which promoted masonry walls, heavy timber frame construction, fire retardant flooring, and towers for water tanks. Mill villages with one-story, frame houses with L-shaped footprints adjoined both mills, but after the Avalon burned in 1911, the houses were moved to Mayodan.

The county's oldest surviving commercial buildings also date from this period. An outstanding commercial complex (RK 1502) stands in Ruffin, just on the east side of the railroad tracks. Probably built shortly after the Civil War and operating until around 1900, the property includes a two-story, gable-front hotel building with paneled porch posts, a double-leaf entrance, and weatherboard siding. A small kitchen, now connected with a hyphen, or enclosed breezeway, stands to the rear, as does a log dwelling, presumably for the owner. Immediately south of the hotel is a one-story gable-front log building known as the Number 13 Saloon, which took its name from the lot number on which the building stands. The Number 13 is Rockingham County's only nineteenth-century, rural or small town commercial building known to have been a saloon, rather than a store, and is one of only a very small number of extant log commercial buildings in the state.

While Ruffin was once a bustling town and some commercial buildings remain, more substantial downtown business districts are found in Stoneville and Mayodan. Despite damage from a 1998 tornado, which was particularly devastating to Stoneville, both retain collections of one- and two-story, brick commercial buildings typical of those built across the state at the end of the century. Several buildings in Stoneville retain cast iron storefronts or cast iron trim while Mayodan's commercial buildings tended to be less decorated with simple brick corbelling accenting cornices. In both towns, streets extend in all directions on grid plans, with the layout being particularly extensive in Mayodan.

On U. S. Highway 158, west of Reidsville, the Cummings Store (RK 1339), built in 1879, is a two-story, gable-front building clad in weatherboards with windows flanking the central double-leaf door. Based on the remaining examples, the store is an unusually large and old example and although it is neglected, it is well-preserved and appears to have undergone few, if any, alterations. Michael Cummings sold goods on credit to many of his customers, who used their crops, land, or even houses as collateral. By his death in 1893, he had amassed thousands of acres and one of the largest funerary monuments in the county stands at his grave at Midway United Methodist Church (RK 1346).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 62

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

A Shifting Landscape Beyond the County's Largest Towns: 1901-1929

The first decades of the twentieth century were a time of great change across the United States. In Rockingham County, the landscape slowly became striped with ribbons of asphalt as highways were built. More houses punctuated the countryside and the towns grew. From the top of the new school in Wentworth, completed in 1923, one could see the lush rolling hills, but also “the smoke from a Norfolk & Western train, Winston Salem bound,” as well as Mayodan, North Spray Woolen Mills, and part of Leaksville. Twenty-five years prior, the same observer would have seen only farms and open space, and would not have had the vantage point of a three-story brick school building.¹⁸⁸

Transportation

In the first decades of the twentieth century, railroads continued to play a vital role in moving Rockingham County's people and goods. New rail construction ceased, but freight and passenger depots at Madison, Mayodan, Price, Ruffin, Benaja, Stoneville, Reidsville, and Leaksville were vital to the county's economy. For example, Powell Brothers (RK 1421), operated by Edd and Arthur Powell beginning in 1903, sold fertilizer to farmers in the northeast part of the county. The Powells received rail shipments in Ruffin and hauled goods via wagon to their store on N.C. Highway 700 or directly to individual farms. Access to a rail corridor kept Powell Brothers in business for over fifty years.

Automobile traffic, however, was poised to overtake the railroads, particularly for transporting passengers. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the state's roads were similar in condition to those of 1800. Dusty in the summer, the rutted tracks were muddy and nearly impassible during much of the winter. Rail was the most efficient and reliable means of transport. In the first decade of the new century, the only improved stretch of road in the county was a few macadamized blocks on a city street in Reidsville, but in 1911, macadamization of the road connecting Settle's Bridge on the Dan to Reidsville by way of Wentworth was finished.¹⁸⁹ This work started in 1907 following a failed 1906 bond referendum that would have provided \$300,000 to improve 158 miles of the county's main roads. A second bond referendum supporting a countywide road

¹⁸⁸ Untitled, undated, and unattributed clipping (circa 1923) found in the General Correspondence of the Office of the Superintendent [of Public Instruction], State Archives, Raleigh, N.C.

¹⁸⁹ Macadamizing is a paving process in which crushed or broken stone and tar are compressed to make a hard, smooth surface.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 63

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

improvement program failed in 1912, but Madison, Leaksville, Spray, and Reidsville macadamized streets and paved sidewalks in the first decade of the twentieth century.¹⁹⁰

Public support began to grow as more residents purchased cars. As a result, more voters and more newspapers became proponents of good roads. *Webster's Weekly*, for example, highlighted transportation inventions and improvements from across the country through "Road Building," a regular feature during the 1910s. But little changed until the establishment of the State Highway Commission in 1921. Several roads were paved in the early 1920s, macadamized roads became highways, and dirt roads were re-graded and topped with gravel. By 1926, the "improved highways" and an "excellent" system of gravel and sand-clay roads criss-crossed the county, making rural mail delivery and mandatory school attendance practical and efficient.¹⁹¹

In 1931, the state began maintaining the county's roads and by 1934, 172 miles of paved roads and 623 of improved dirt roads traversed Rockingham County. Numerous road construction projects in the 1920s and 1930s resulted in the realignment of older roads, as evidenced by paved but unused roadbeds sometimes paralleling current roads. Usually, these realignments straightened curves, created better intersections, climbed or descended hills more easily, or provided approaches to new bridges.

In 1912 a freshet washed away over thirty-five of the wooden bridges that crossed the county's streams. Although the county continued to construct these semi-permanent bridges, the situation did prompt the installation of steel truss bridges at several locations. Two nineteenth-century covered bridges over the Dan at Madison and Leaksville remained in use into the 1930s and 1940s respectively, while a third (Settle's Bridge) was in service until 1950. Concrete and permanent wooden bridges over creeks and streams became common during the 1920s. One ferry on the Dan River, Gwynn's located east of Draper, made regular crossings until 1914.¹⁹²

Commerce and Industry

Leaksville, Reidsville, Madison, Spray, and Mayodan continued to enjoy the prosperity brought by tobacco and textile factories in the early twentieth century. In Spray, Benjamin Franklin Mebane continued building textile factories. Spray Woolen Mill and Morehead Cotton Mills began production in 1902 and Rhode Island Mill started operating in 1903. In 1904 Mebane constructed a new building for his Spray Mercantile Company, which stands today as one of the most elaborate commercial buildings in the county.

¹⁹⁰ Rodenbough, *Heritage*, 64-65.

¹⁹¹ Journey, *Soil Survey*, 3.

¹⁹² Rodenbough, *Heritage*, 66-67.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 64

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

In 1906, Spray Water and Power Company built the German-American Mill on open land east of Spray on the north side of Dan River. The adjacent town, intended to be a model mill village, was named Draper for one of the village's designers, Arthur Draper, president of the American Warehouse in Spray. A railroad depot was built in 1907 and a school opened the following year. Other merchants established concerns and churches organized. In 1911, Marshall Field and Company of Chicago acquired the mill and the town expanded.¹⁹³

By the early 1910s, Mebane was financially overextended and his principal creditor, Marshall Field and Company, assumed control of five Mebane mills and his American Warehouse. Mebane retained Morehead Cotton Mills and Leaksville Cotton Mill. During the first decades of the twentieth century, the Spray mills turned out yarns, gingham, outings, and blankets of cotton and wool. The Marshall Field corporation brought organization to the mills and quickly established competent management for the complex. In 1912, Marshall Field employed more than 1,500 people at their six local mills, rapidly increasing the community's population as operations expanded at Spray and Draper. Scores of houses were built and new brick mill buildings went up. By 1918, thirteen textile factories operated in Leaksville, Draper and Spray.¹⁹⁴

In Madison, Harry, George, and Howard Penn founded the Penn Brothers Suspender Company in 1914. Harry's son, Green, invented an adjustable garter for women that he called Gem-Dandy. In 1921, he formed the Gem-Dandy Garter Company as an outgrowth of Penn Brothers. Gem-Dandy eventually began producing clothing accessories, suspenders, lingerie and foundation garments.¹⁹⁵

Just to the north in Mayodan, investors decided to expand Mayo Mills rather than rebuild Avalon after fire destroyed it in 1911. By 1918, the Mayodan plant was described as an extensive textile establishment with the largest capital stock of any mill in the county. The mill "gives excellent employment to a thriving and busy population. The mill is the backbone of the town. Mayodan is a town with a backbone but no backache."¹⁹⁶

Tobacco manufacturing concerns continued to be the mainstay of Reidsville's economy. While many remained small independent concerns in the 1910s, James B. "Buck" Duke's American Tobacco Company bought the highly successful firm of F.R. Penn and Company. Charles Penn, F.R.'s son, began rising through American's ranks, eventually becoming vice president of manufacturing. In the process, his marketing ideas

¹⁹³ Butler, *Rockingham County*, 72 and 79.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 79 and Eden Historic Preservation Commission and Brown, *Three Cities*, 30.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 81.

¹⁹⁶ Rockingham County Club (University of North Carolina), *Rockingham County: Economic and Social* (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Printing Company, 1918), 21.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 65

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

for the Lucky Strike brand made it one of the all-time best selling cigarettes. When American's executives decided to build a factory dedicated to its production, Penn suggested Reidsville. The new factory became the town's economic foundation and until the late twentieth century, was one of the largest industrial operations in the county.¹⁹⁷

In the early 1900s in Rockingham County, over eleven thousand people were employed in industry producing \$169,913,885 worth of commodities.¹⁹⁸ While the large textile and tobacco companies made a more noticeable mark on the county's economy, many of the county's seventy-three industrial enterprises operating in 1918 were small-scale, rural endeavors. Nineteenth century gristmills operated throughout the county well into the twentieth century. Just outside of Ruffin, the Worsham Mill, also known as the Ruffin Mill, was constructed in 1908 on the site of an earlier mill that burned. This and another water powered gristmill, King's Mill near Eden, continued to operate into the early 1970s.¹⁹⁹ Roller mills began to be built in the last decades of the nineteenth century, with most dating from the early twentieth century. By 1918, the Ruffin Roller Mills was producing flour and meal.²⁰⁰

Although gristmills continued production into the years beyond the Great Depression, many were already closing in the 1920s. With increasing access to automobiles and improving roads, it became easier to patronize the grocery stores in the county's towns and cities rather than relying on small, local mills for cornmeal and flour. Even rural sawmills began becoming obsolete as rural builders found it just as easy to procure lumber from a handful of centralized lumberyards. By 1929, just under six thousand, or slightly more than half the number from 1918, were employed in manufacturing. Additionally, the number of establishments had been more than halved, to thirty-eight, most of which were textile and tobacco factories.²⁰¹

Rural and Small-Town Education and Religion

At the beginning of the twentieth century, North Carolina's education system was failing, despite some post-war improvements. The state had the second worst illiteracy rate in the nation by 1900.²⁰² In 1910, about thirteen percent of Rockingham County's

¹⁹⁷ M. Ruth Little, "Chinqua-Penn Plantation," National Register Nomination, 1993, section 8, 1.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 18

¹⁹⁹ Rodenbough, *Heritage*, 38.

²⁰⁰ Rockingham County Club, *Economic and Social*, 23.

²⁰¹ North Carolina Writers Project source material.

²⁰² Wake County Public Schools, *Biennial Report: Wake County Public Schools* (Raleigh: Wake County Public Schools, 1907), 11.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 66

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

population could not read or write.²⁰³ In the first years of the new century, North Carolina spent an average of \$2.63 per child for education while Massachusetts spent \$26.42 on each child.²⁰⁴ New South advocates were among the first to call for improvements. Industrialist D.A. Tompkins felt the South had the potential to become the manufacturing center of the world if the region would “follow [the North’s] lead, and never rest till our people lead the world in education.”²⁰⁵ Legislators and other politicians began listening.

Democrats elected to office as a result of white supremacy campaigns initiated educational reform for both whites and blacks while some of the efforts to disenfranchise black voters actually fostered educational improvements that eventually trickled down to African American pupils. The state’s 1900 constitutional amendment created a literacy requirement for voting, with a grandfather clause that reserved the right to vote for any man eligible to vote prior to 1867 or to lineal descendants of these voters. This loophole gave illiterate white men voting rights, but only through December 1, 1908. Thus, better education for white children was necessary to insure whites would still be able to vote. As an advocate of both education and white supremacy, Charles B. Aycock became the state’s “education governor.” Regardless of his motives, or those of other education advocates, the result was an unprecedented public interest in education and improved education for both races, though at uneven rates.²⁰⁶

In 1907, the state passed “an act to stimulate high school instruction in public schools,” which provided money to build rural high schools.²⁰⁷ By 1911, two hundred new high schools dotted North Carolina’s countryside. Throughout the 1910s, laws were enacted to extend the school term, provide transportation (albeit to a very limited degree), consolidate the numerous one-room schools, and increase educational spending. According to historian James Leloudis, “the state built more than five thousand schoolhouses, professionalized teacher training, and developed an elaborate bureaucracy to administer the instruction of youth.”²⁰⁸

²⁰³ United States Census, 1910, accessed via <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/census>.

²⁰⁴ Wake County Public Schools, *Biennial Report*, 11.

²⁰⁵ D.A. Tompkins quoted in George Tayloe Winston, *A Builder of the New South, Being the Story of the Life and Works of Daniel Augustus Tompkins* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page, and Company, 1920), 127.

²⁰⁶ “The Development of North Carolina’s Public School System Through 1940,” unpublished, undated report, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, 4-5.

²⁰⁷ North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, *The History of Education in North Carolina* (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1994), 12.

²⁰⁸ James Leloudis, “A More Certain Means of Grace: Pedagogy, Self and Society in North Carolina, 1880-1920” (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, 1989), 1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 67

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

With the transportation improvements of the 1920s, consolidation accelerated and a second wave of school building began for white children. African American children, however, did not generally benefit from busing and consolidation until the early 1950s. While public funds were provided for their schools, it was usually minimal, and extra monetary and in-kind support from the community was necessary to construct new buildings. In addition, several private foundations or funds were available to organized communities in need of a school. The most popular was the Rosenwald Fund, conceived by Booker T. Washington and funded by philanthropist Julius Rosenwald for the benefit of African American schoolchildren. The fund provided matching grants as well as building plans and recommendations for school operation.

Between 1919 and 1929, ten Rosenwald schools were built in Rockingham County. The largest were constructed in Leaksville (ten rooms), Madison (six rooms), and Stoneville (three rooms). The remainder were one- or two-room buildings located outside the county's towns. While several early twentieth-century African American schools stand today, it does not appear that any are Rosenwald-funded buildings, except possibly in Madison.²⁰⁹

Attendance and literacy rates in Rockingham County reflected the renewed attention to public education. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, roughly sixty percent of all school-aged children were enrolled. In the late 1910s, nine new schools were constructed for white students and four existing buildings were renovated. Four rural high schools had been constructed under the 1907 state high school act and four other high schools were operating in the county's towns, bringing the total number of schools open to white children to eighty-five and the total number for African American students to forty.²¹⁰ Accordingly, the percentage of illiterate residents dropped from thirteen percent in 1910 to ten percent in 1920. During the 1920s, the illiteracy rate would drop to seven percent.²¹¹

The largest school construction project of the time was Wentworth Consolidated School, completed in 1923. The school followed state regulations and guidelines for the ideal school building. Schools were to be built of brick (as the Wentworth building was), concrete, or stone, located on main highways, contain an auditorium, library, and gym, which could also be used by the public, and in general should be a source of pride for the surrounding citizens. Other standards included steam heat, plumbing, electric lights, and

²⁰⁹ Thomas W. Hanchett, "The Rosenwald Schools and Black Education in North Carolina," *North Carolina Historical Review* 4 (October 1988): 389, 390, and 440 and Carter interview.

²¹⁰ Rockingham County Club, *Economic and Social*, 60.

²¹¹ United States Census, 1930; data accessed via <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu>.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 68

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

drinking fountains.²¹² The Wentworth School met those requirements with an auditorium capable of seating 1,500, a library, showers, and classrooms specifically designed for home economics and agricultural instruction. One observer felt that once the building was finished “and the Star Spangled Banner hoisted to the top of the flag pole, not one of the 100 counties of the Old North State can in truth say to Rockingham county, ‘We have you beat.’”²¹³

During the early twentieth century, religious activities varied little from earlier patterns. Methodists, Baptists, Primitive Baptists, and Presbyterians attracted the most congregants and were prevalent in rural areas, as well as the growing urban centers. Episcopal churches attempted to gain a foothold in rural locations. In the 1910s, they established St. Martin’s (RK 1187) on the Stokes-Rockingham County line, west of Madison, and St. Mary’s-by-the-Highway (RK 914) south of Leaksville on Highway 87. Both of these were mission churches executed in rustic style. St. Martin’s is log building constructed with round logs and overlapping saddle notching and St. Mary’s-by-the-Highway is covered in wood shakes. By 1929, sixty-eight churches dotted Rockingham County.²¹⁴

Agriculture

Agriculture in the early twentieth century changed very little from patterns established in late nineteenth-century Rockingham County: small farms, tenancy, and tobacco remained hallmarks of the county’s agriculture. By 1925, the county’s rural population totaled 49,300, of whom 18,300 (or 37%) were farmers. Of these farmers, 14,186 were white; 4,114 were African American.²¹⁵ Tobacco continued gaining economic importance as the county’s cash crop, although wheat and corn were produced in significant quantities as well. In the first decades of the twentieth century, tenancy, the single-crop system, and small farms of under 100 acres characterized the county’s agricultural system just as they had in the previous thirty years.

The county’s chief products in the 1910s were grains, tobacco, and beef and dairy products, but one observer lamented the “devotion to the single-crop system” claiming that it “has sadly impeded the agricultural development of the county.”²¹⁶ Despite the ills of the cash crop system, business at R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company and the American

²¹² “Development,” 7.

²¹³ Untitled, undated, and unattributed clipping (circa 1923) found in the General Correspondence of the Office of the Superintendent [of Public Instruction], State Archives, Raleigh, N.C.

²¹⁴ North Carolina Writers Project source materials.

²¹⁵ North Carolina Writers Project source materials.

²¹⁶ Rockingham County Club, *Economic and Social*, 15.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 69

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Tobacco Company was booming as cigarette consumption soared, particularly during World War I when the War Department purchased an entire year's output of Bull Durham cigarettes to send to troops. According to General John J. Pershing, "You ask me what we need to win this war. I answer tobacco as much as guns. . . . Tobacco is as indispensable as the daily ration; we must have thousands of tons without delay."²¹⁷ With demand high, Rockingham County farmers could not resist growing the golden leaf. Though their diets were probably more limited as time and land were devoted to tobacco and their finances were easily and quickly affected by the market, farmers enjoyed some level of modest prosperity as evidenced by the number of dwellings expanded from one-room log structures to more sophisticated houses in the 1910s and 1920s.

Tenancy remained common. In 1910, tenants operated more farms than owners (1,738 tenant farms versus 1,431 owner-operated farms). Most tenants were white and nearly all farmed on a share system, whereby landlords contributed some of the necessary items for farming and received in rent a certain portion of the crop. Only 103 tenants paid their landlords with cash.²¹⁸ As of 1920, a little over eighty percent of the county's land was farmed, nearly fifty-five percent of the county's farms were tenant operated, and almost no tenants farmed on a cash-for-rent basis.²¹⁹ Probably the landlord with the greatest number of tenants in the county was John M. Galloway, the world's largest tobacco farmer, who owned thousands of acres in Rockingham and Stokes counties during the 1910s.²²⁰

The tenant farm and single-crop system, however, still faced the same problems they had in the nineteenth century. The absence of diversified farming left little land available for food crops, so some farmers, particularly tenants, had to spend cash on food. The Greensboro *Patriot* deplored the importation of meat from Chicago and flour from Minnesota. The *Progressive Farmer* reported in 1924 that in nearby Person County, another tobacco county, "tobacco money must be spent for food and feed and fertilizer – all of which could be raised at home by diversified farming."

By 1926, the number of acres dedicated to tobacco doubled from late nineteenth-century numbers.²²¹ In 1910, Rockingham families produced 2,280,000 pounds of tobacco, second only to Pitt County. The county's farm wealth increased over sixty-

²¹⁷ General John J. Pershing quoted at www.tobacco.org/history/tobacco_history.html.

²¹⁸ United States Census, 1910, data accessed via <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu>.

²¹⁹ United States Census, 1910, data accessed via <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu> and Jurney, 7.

²²⁰ Tilley, *Bright-Tobacco*, 92.

²²¹ Jurney, *Soil Survey*, 5.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 70

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

percent between 1900 and 1910, making it the thirty-first agriculturally wealthy county in the state.²²²

Farm size remained small. In 1910, the average farm consisted of 82.1 acres, with an average of 30.6 acres of that improved or cultivated.²²³ In 1918, almost one-third of the county's farms were less than fifty acres in size, but larger farms of one hundred to five hundred acres still constituted just over forty percent of all farms in Rockingham County. African American ownership of farms remained relatively low: African Americans owned only 180 of the county's 3,084 farms.²²⁴

The most striking change on the farm was the method by which tobacco was harvested. Before the 1910s, the entire tobacco stalk was split in half and the halves hung from tobacco sticks for curing. The popularity of cigarettes, specifically of R.J. Reynolds's Camel brand, created the need for a process that would produce a lighter leaf. Rather than harvesting the entire stalk, leaves were individually pulled off the stalks as they matured. Farmers passed through their fields picking the oldest leaves first (those at the bottom of the stalk) usually picking about three leaves per stalk. As the crop matured, farmers "primed" the field repeatedly, usually five or six times, each time harvesting the oldest leaves. Tobacco leaves were then tied to sticks with twine and hung in the curing barn. After curing, the tobacco was moved to a packhouse, usually a frame structure, but occasionally a log building. Some farmers called this stage "resting" the tobacco. Once the resting period was completed, the tobacco was moved to the basement of the packhouse where the leaves, dry and brittle from curing, could reabsorb moisture to prevent crumbling. This step was referred to as bringing the tobacco "to order" or putting the tobacco "in order." Finally, the leaves were tied into bundles to await transport to market. Farmers without packhouses sometimes used their homes' cellars, attics, spare rooms, or other outbuildings to store the crop.²²⁵

Although farmers did not allocate copious amounts of time, energy, or land to growing foodstuffs, garden vegetables, apples, peaches, pears, plums, cherries, watermelons, and cantaloupes for home consumption were raised on most farms during the 1920s. Chickens, turkeys, and hogs were also kept primarily for the family's use, but some were sold locally. A few farmers attempted growing cotton while dairying began making inroads in the 1920s. Devotion to tobacco, however, still limited food variety and

²²² Rockingham County Club, *Economic and Social*, 24.

²²³ United States Census, 1910, data accessed via <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu>.

²²⁴ Rockingham County Club, *Economic and Social*, 16.

²²⁵ Interviews with numerous farmers throughout the county over the course of the survey and notes provided by Bob Carter.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 71

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

the amount of land on which fodder could grow. Thus, over sixty-percent of the county's farmers had to purchase feed for their livestock in 1919.²²⁶

Farmers also did not generally practice crop rotation. Corn was usually grown in the bottomlands year after year. Those who rotated crops used various combinations of wheat, corn, clover, rye, and tobacco, but usually not in particularly beneficial combinations. Most commonly in Rockingham County, farmers simply alternated between tobacco and wheat. As a result, 3,436 of the county's 3,664 farms documented in the 1920 census used commercial fertilizers at an average annual cost of \$88.65 per farm, but few farmers were applying the correct types or quantities for their particular soil.²²⁷

Architecture Beyond the County's Largest Towns

While residents of Reidsville, Leaksville, and Madison began building Colonial Revival or Craftsman-influenced foursquares, bungalows and a few substantial, commodious houses on par with those built in larger cities, the trends of the late 1800s actually became more entrenched in rural Rockingham County, in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Even in Ruffin, Stoneville, and Wentworth, bustling towns in the early 1900s, new styles were not readily accepted, and in Mayodan, the small mill houses of the late 1800s continued to be built. Overbuilding around smaller, older houses, however, remained a truly rural practice, with no known examples in Ruffin, Stoneville, or Mayodan.

Wealth and taste were becoming concentrated in the towns rather than spread across the county. Whereas the largest, most high-style houses of the antebellum period were built on plantations, the most fashionable and stylish residences were now reserved for towns. New farm dwellings, while improving the rural housing stock overall, now were nearly exclusively modest buildings of only a few rooms. The stylishness of rural architecture had begun to lag significantly behind that of the towns after the Civil War, but the gap became a gulf in the first half of the twentieth century. Designs usually associated with the last three decades of the nineteenth century that are seen in Rockingham County's countryside are as likely, if not more likely, to have been built in the early 1900s instead of the late 1800s.

In early 1914, the editor of *Webster's Weekly* reported that "more of the country people are making improvements to their dwellings than ever known before. The good prices obtained for tobacco has helped them up wonderfully."²²⁸ This statement indicates

²²⁶ *Jurney, Soil Survey*, 5-6.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

²²⁸ *Webster's Weekly* (Leaksville), 30 January 1914, 4.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 72

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

that rural householders were expanding and improving their homes, and the existing architectural record bares that out. The small farmer was indeed on the rise and perhaps aspiring to the life of the successful yeoman farmer of the antebellum era. But rather than adopting the bungalow, foursquare, or Colonial Revival designs surely delivered to his house via increasingly popular magazines, he built an I-house or expanded his existing house into an I-house. In short, in rural Rockingham County, a larger house did not necessarily yield a more fashionable house. Transportation improvements and the prosperity of small farmers were yielding more efficient connections to the outside world, yet the rural architecture seems more disconnected from popular taste, even from the designs seen in the county's towns, than at any other time.

The pattern of making a frame addition to a single-pen log house to create an I-house has nineteenth-century roots, but crested in the 1910s and was one of the most pervasive trends of building between 1900 and 1929. Exteriors of both overbuilt log houses and new I-houses constructed all at once featured the same mass-produced ornament and were indistinguishable without close examination. Sawwork trim was applied to gable ends and as brackets on porch posts. Decorative shingles and fancy brick corbelling on the chimneys made occasional appearances. Two-over-two sash windows were favored, but increasingly in the 1920s and especially in the following decade, Craftsman-style windows were installed with multiple lights in the upper sash and one light in the lower.

The interiors also reflected the increased availability of mass produced building materials. Beaded board sheathing covered the interior of most rural houses. Window and door surrounds were often trimmed with square cornerblocks decorated with bull's eye concentric circles. Simple mantelpieces constructed from standard moldings and turned pieces of wood were the most common, but occasionally, more elaborate pieces with colonnettes or overmantels or, at the opposite extreme, homemade, vernacular surrounds were installed. Staircases with turned balustrades and molded railings were another element to which more or less prefabricated Queen Anne decorations could be applied. It is often assumed that such treatments fell out of vogue by the late 1910s, but an affinity for sawwork and beaded board continued in Rockingham County throughout the 1920s. The Tom Dye House (RK 1485), a two-story I-house, bears all the marks of a late nineteenth-century house, with decorative shingles, turned porch posts, and two-over-two sash windows, yet it was built in 1926.

Early Colonial Revival treatments, while not as common as picturesque treatments, also appear on I-houses and on wing-and-gable houses of the early twentieth century. Most commonly, tripartite attic vent and window combinations arranged in a

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 73

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Palladian form and Tuscan columns on porches were the standard treatments. More academic Colonial Revival houses tended to be built only in the county's largest towns.

Despite the continued appearance of the I-house, the foursquare of the early 1900s made inroads into the county during the late 1910s and 1920s. The Webster House (RK 1165) is a two-story hip-roof dwelling with columns on brick piers supporting the full-width porch and sidelights and a transom surrounding the central entrance. Behind the house, two pyramidal-roof outbuildings (probably a dairy and a privy), a frame barn, and log crib stand amid a landscape of boxwoods, cedar trees, azaleas, periwinkle, flagstone paths, and planting beds. Near Madison, the 1923 Lauten Place (RK 1180), built by William "Tatum" and Susie Lauten, is a substantial two-story hip-roof house with a prominent columned portico that extends over the one-story wrap-around porch.

While some farmers were able to build larger homes or expand smaller ones, poorer farmers built small, log houses just like those of their ancestors. Log construction remained a common housing solution, particularly on the less profitable farms in the rocky northwest. In the 1920s in the Goinstown community, James Hickman built a log house (RK 1174), now covered in several types of man-made siding, with a massive gable-end fieldstone chimney.

An anomaly in Rockingham County's rural residential trends is Chinqua-Penn (RK 884, NR 1993). Thomas Jefferson "Jeff" Penn was the son of Frank Reid and Annie Spencer Penn who moved from Patrick County, Virginia to Reidsville where F.R. and his brother, S.C., formed the F.R. Penn Tobacco Company. Jeff worked for his father's company as a sales representative in San Francisco and Shanghai, China until James B. Duke's American Tobacco Company bought the Penn firm in 1911. While his brother, Charles, rose to the top of American Tobacco, Jeff became an investment broker and farmer. He eventually amassed over twelve hundred acres in Rockingham County and was known as a pioneer in modern dairy methods. Penn split his time between his brokerage in Buffalo, New York and his farm in Rockingham County. In 1923, he married his second wife, Margaret Beatrice "Betsy" Schoelkopf, and together they traveled the globe collecting art objects.²²⁹

Between 1923 and 1925, the couple built Chinqua-Penn, a sprawling log and stone complex between Reidsville and Wentworth. The site comprises the main house, rustic lodges for servants, formal and informal gardens, gatehouses, a swimming pool with a Chinese pagoda, a greenhouse, and an Italian style bell tower. New York architect Harry Ingles designed the twenty-seven-room log and stone hunting-lodge style mansion at the heart of the complex. Exotic period rooms represent Spanish, Italian, Renaissance,

²²⁹ Little, "Chinqua-Penn Plantation," section 8, 1-2.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 74

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

English Jacobean, Pompeiian, Chinese, and Classical Revival styles in which art and art objects the Penns collected on frequent trips abroad could be displayed.²³⁰

Although Penn employed Ingles and landscape architect William E. Davies of Buffalo, Chinqua-Penn is the realization of Jeff Penn's personal vision. It is the only architect-designed private residence in the county, outside its towns, and it is the only example of formal landscape design in the county.²³¹ It is one of the few early twentieth-century country estates in North Carolina and one of the most personal architectural statements created by a member of the state's wealthy elite.²³²

Despite the increasingly industrialized economy, Rockingham County remained predominantly an agricultural area characterized by farms with numerous outbuildings. Farmers continued to organize their outbuildings around a dwelling in much the same way as farms of the nineteenth century. Although barns for curing tobacco had been built throughout the period of European settlement in Rockingham County, most of the log tobacco barns standing today were probably built between 1900 and 1950, with the majority dating from the earlier decades of the century. Their simplicity and relatively static form and method of assembly through the first half of the twentieth century make applying dates with any certainty nearly impossible, yet a few traits are somewhat distinctive and can usually place the construction date of a log tobacco barn before the 1930s or after. Log continued to be used after World War II, but frame, hollow-core-tile, or concrete block tobacco barns were typically built after World War II.

One of the oldest tobacco barns in the county to which a solid date can be applied is the Irvin Barn (RK 1305) built around 1900, or possibly in the late 1800s. Its features are generally shared by those of the earlier period. The barn is noticeably taller than later barns, giving the square building a distinctive vertical orientation. The logs are fairly large and are carefully hewn and notched. The circa 1935 Carter Barn (RK 1305) is squatter in appearance, but is still a square or slightly rectangular log building, with logs left round or were only half-heartedly hewn. The simpler square notch is often seen on these later barns. Older barns were often deconstructed and the viable logs reused in newer barns, as was the case at the Willie Sparks Farm (RK 1495) where several turn-of-the-twentieth century barns were used to build other tobacco barns in the 1940s and 1950s.

After tobacco leaves were cured or dried in the barns, the now-brittle leaves were stored to reabsorb moisture so that they would be more flexible and less prone to

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ The gardens installed at Mulberry Island by Jeff's brother, Charlie, and his wife during the 1930s may have been architect-designed, but to date, the presence of a designer is not known.

²³² Little, "Chinqua-Penn Plantation," section 8, 1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 75

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

crumbling during transport and at auction. Sometimes cured leaves were packed in other barns, but often leaves were stored in the attic, spare room, or basement in the farmer's house; basically, anywhere the leaf could be kept out of the weather. While this haphazard practice continued in the twentieth century, some growers began constructing purpose-built packhouses in the late nineteenth century; existing examples date from the early twentieth century. Packhouses are log or frame, side-gable or front-gable buildings of one-story or one-story with a loft standing over a dirt basement. Cured tobacco was kept in the upper rooms of the building and then moved to the basement for maximum exposure to moisture before being sold.

Tobacco-related buildings were, of course, not the only outbuildings. On the Willie Sparks Farm is the county's only recorded V-shaped or diamond-shaped corncrib. In the early 1900s, Sparks went on a field trip to Pennsylvania possibly organized by the agricultural extension agency, and upon his return, he built a corncrib like those he saw on the trip. The small structure is frame covered with wooden slats. The side walls angle in to a very narrow floor. The gable roof gives the building an asymmetrical diamond-shaped façade.

The nature of farming and the county's terrain make it difficult to discern tenant houses. The rolling hills, occasional steep inclines, and numerous creeks divided farms visually and fostered the tendency of large-scale landholders to own many unconnected farms; thus the tenant house as an outbuilding or in close proximity to a larger house is rare. With the prevalence of tenancy, however, many of the small saddlebag houses and simple gable-front bungalows likely served as tenant houses. One of the few known examples stands at the J. S. Wall House (RK 1182) where a tenant constructed a log dogtrot house behind the main house in the late 1930s.

Most of the oldest school buildings standing in the county date from the early 1900s and, like the houses that were their contemporaries, most incorporated a minimal amount of Queen Anne references on their exterior, such as modest sawnwork, turned porch posts, or beaded board sheathing. Interiors were similarly dressed with beaded board sheathing and molded door and window trim with bull's eyes in square cornerblocks. In general, these one- and two-room schools emulated the building patterns seen across the state during this period.

The early twentieth-century frame schools survive in the county's rural areas as abandoned buildings, farm storage buildings, or houses. Despite neglect and conversion to residential use, a surprising number, at least seventeen of the twenty-one documented, retain their historical and architectural integrity and character. Glencoe School (RK 1336) just off U. S. Highway 158 near Guilford County, opened in 1905. The one-story frame building has a T-shaped plan with a gabled roof. Board-and-batten siding covers the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 76

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

gable ends and tall windows with transoms above pierce the walls. Window and door trim is finished with bull's eye cornerblocks. Grassy Springs School (RK 1301) was built in 1912 on N. C. Highway 135 between Eden and the Shiloh crossroads. Smaller and less elaborate than Glencoe, the gable-front building housed one classroom and has six-over-six sash windows. One of the most intact early twentieth-century schools is Joyce School (RK 1161), located north of Mayodan. The one-room, frame, gable-front school retains its square cupola, some interior plaster above a beaded board wainscot, and window and door trim finished with cornerblocks decorated with Xs. Glencoe, Grassy Springs, and Joyce were part of the building boom of the early 1900s and all three closed during the consolidation surge of the 1920s.

The Poteat School (RK 1494) was built around 1920 to serve African American students. The one-story hip-roof building probably had six-over-six sash windows with transoms above, but plywood currently covers the windows. Unlike the early twentieth-century schools for white children that closed during consolidation in the 1920s, Poteat School (RK 1494), northwest of Ruffin, operated until about 1950. In the northeast, Blue Stone School (RK 1550) opened in 1919 and, like Poteat, held classes until 1950. Blue Stone was a two-room school with a hip roof and weatherboard siding. Before being replaced, six-over-six sash windows with transoms pierced the side elevations. Beaded board covered the interior, but is now covered with wall board.

Large consolidated schools were built in the towns as well as in the crossroads communities of Wentworth, Bethany, Huntsville, Ruffin, Williamsburg, Intelligence, and Happy Home. Most of the 1920s building at Intelligence is obscured by additions, but the schools at Bethany (RK 1318), built in 1924, Happy Home, built in 1935 (RK 1490), and Williamsburg, also built in 1935 (RK 1541) are nearly intact and identical one-story, hip-roof brick buildings with U-shaped footprints. The largest, however, is Wentworth Consolidated School (RK 1281) completed in 1923. The brick two-story building stands above a basement and is executed in the restrained Colonial Revival style typical of large schools built across the state in the 1920s. The entrance is located in a segmental-arched recess trimmed with stone molding. Above the entrance, wide consoles support a hood and above this, a recessed sign panel gives the school's name and Roman numerals provide its construction date.

Three notable government buildings date to the first decades of the twentieth century. The largest of these is the county courthouse, completed in 1907 to replace the 1881 building that burned in 1906. The courthouse (RK 5, NR 1970), designed by noted courthouse architect Frank Milburn and built by B. F. Smith Construction Company from Washington, D.C., is a three-story, classically-inspired building with a portico supported by brick columns. The building features a low cupola and a heavy cornice. The former

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 77

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Rockingham County Jail (RK 5, NR 1970) was added to the governmental complex in Wentworth between 1910 and 1911. Architects Wheeler and Stern of Charlotte designed the imposing two-story brick building with a square tower and wide frieze and cornice. The County Home (RK 1279), located just east of Wentworth, was built in 1913 to house the county's poor, elderly residents. The two-story brick building stretches out in a shallow V-shape with shaped parapets on each end and over the center entrance bay. The building retains six-over-six sash windows set in segmental-arched openings on the front elevation, although the first floor of the center bay has been remodeled with the addition of a modern brick façade. Together with the Wentworth Consolidated School, these buildings were the largest and most important public buildings in the county until the construction of the community college in the mid-twentieth century.

Commercial buildings, like houses, continued to be constructed in the forms of the nineteenth century, but a new type emerged. As car ownership increased, gas stations popped up along the rural roadside, usually constructed in nationally popular forms. Many, like the former Gulf gas station (RK 1128) on U.S. Highway 220, were gable-front frame buildings with a canopy extending over the pump area. The traditional rural general store, usually a one- or two-story frame, gable-front building, continued to be built through the 1920s. One- and two-story brick commercial buildings were erected in the downtowns of Mayodan and Stoneville. The Stone Building (RK 1208) and the Thomas General Merchandise Building (RK 1208) in Stoneville display brick storefronts with two-over-two sash windows on the second floor and wood storefronts with recessed entrances on the first floor.

Change Comes Slowly in the Countryside and Hamlets: 1930-1953

The impact of the Great Depression on Rockingham County was similar to that experienced in all the state's rural counties. The less urban character of the area saved it from some of the economic strife seen in cities, but suffering and poverty were still rampant. While Rockingham County had become more industrialized than neighboring Caswell and Stokes counties, residents were still predominantly rural farmers growing a crop that R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company and American Tobacco Company continued to purchase throughout the Depression. Tobacco, however, proved both a blessing and a curse. Suffering in general from the depressed economy, more farmers began growing more tobacco, which, in turn, left them with less energy or space in their fields for food and fodder and created a price-lowering glut. As a result, farmers were further removed from a self-sufficient way of life and became more dependant on a single cash crop that

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 78

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

was declining in value. While tobacco growing and manufacturing helped keep the county's residents afloat, nearly twenty percent were deemed "destitute" in 1933.²³³

In an effort to end the Depression, the Federal government instituted the New Deal, which consisted of recovery and assistance programs aimed at providing the general public with immediate relief and creating long-term economic stability for the country. The federal Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA), one of many New Deal programs, was adopted in 1933. It created an allotment system and provided subsidies to farmers who reduced production. Both changes helped Rockingham County farmers stop tobacco overproduction and leave themselves time and room to produce foodstuffs. The program also encouraged better farming practices by requiring recipients to use terracing and to adopt other environmentally sound conservation measures.

The county also made efforts to provide assistance to local farmers. In February 1933, a county committee on welfare formulated a farm relief plan aimed primarily at tenant farmers. The county planned to house unemployed and "distressed" tenants in the numerous vacant tenant houses across the county. The county would give the tenant seed and fertilizer for the sole purpose of cultivating gardens and provide food and support until the tenant was able to reap the benefits of his or her garden. Excess garden products were to be turned back over to the county for canning and storing for future assistance. Participating landlords had to agree to the plan and allow families to grow food crops for their own use. The tenant and landlord were to make their own terms concerning cash crop cultivation, but the county promised oversight to prevent abuses.²³⁴

The Works Progress Administration offered relief off the farm. WPA construction programs built new post offices in Leaksville, Madison, and Reidsville where sleek, incised Moderne and Art Deco treatments were applied to a classical facade, creating the county's finest example of Moderne architecture. Federal relief programs provided other buildings including a public library in Leaksville, a court building on Boone Road in Spray, an addition to the county jail in Wentworth, and armories in Madison, Reidsville, and Leaksville.

The county organized its own non-agricultural relief system by early 1933. Men and boys built retaining walls, dug out basements, planted new shrubs, graded yards, and weeded existing planting beds on church and school grounds. Businessmen reported happily that, "almost every family is being benefited directly or indirectly by the work, which has made a market over the country for a tremendous amount of food and

²³³ *Reidsville Review*, 13 January 1933, 1.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 22 February 1933.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 79

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

clothing.” The same newspaper cheerfully reported, “there is little to indicate that the men are working to ward off starvation.”²³⁵

In general, Rockingham County’s economy stayed afloat throughout the Depression despite the fact that the county was more urban than at any prior time in its history. Many of Rockingham County’s municipalities had small banks, some had industrial interests, and all had commercial operations. The only major bank failure was the Citizens Bank of Reidsville, although Farmers Bank in Madison also closed. Also in Reidsville, the new Annie Penn Memorial Hospital was unable to pay its mortgage. The facility was forced to shut its doors in 1932, but with financial support from the Duke Endowment and First National Bank, the hospital reopened on March 1, 1933.²³⁶ The county’s textile mills, like most in the state, did not close but were forced to reduce hours and wages and lay off employees. The American Tobacco Company, operating in Reidsville, cut the rate of pay for its workers from \$6 per thousand cigarettes produced to \$5.50 per thousand. The cut was effective immediately in February 1933 and was applied the stock already at the factory.²³⁷

Economic recovery began in the late 1930s, but in Rockingham County, as across the country, it was not assured until World War II stimulated industry and produced unprecedented prosperity. During and after the war, cigarette consumption remained high, enabling the county’s farmers to begin purchasing tractors and combines. The county’s textile mills and tobacco factories flourished as hours of operation and the number of employees cut during the Depression expanded during the war.

Industry and Commerce

Rockingham County’s industry continued to be based on textiles and tobacco throughout the first half of the twentieth century with activity increasingly centered in Reidsville, Madison, and the towns of Leaksville, Draper, and Spray, which would form Eden. By 1939, forty-five manufacturing concerns employed nearly eight thousand operatives.²³⁸ In 1953, 12,970 people worked in the county’s factories: 2,360 in tobacco companies with the remainder in textiles. Reidsville remained the center of the county’s tobacco manufacturing with Brown and Williamson and the American Tobacco Company producing cigarettes in that city.²³⁹

²³⁵ Ibid., 6 January 1933.

²³⁶ Ibid., 1 March 1933 and Rodenbough, *Heritage*, 126.

²³⁷ Ibid., 13 February 1933.

²³⁸ United States Census, 1940, data accessed via <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu>.

²³⁹ Butler, *Rockingham County*, 78 and Sharpe, “Gem,” 13.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 80

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Although a few new enterprises were established, such as Burlington Industries' drapery plant in Reidsville which opened in the 1930s and the Madison Throwing Company which opened in 1947, the major change in the textile industry was consolidation. In 1943, Cone Mills of Greensboro purchased the former Reidsville Cotton Mill, also previously known as Hermitage Cotton Mill, and the Edna Mill. In 1947, Marshall Field named their manufacturing division, of which the company's holdings in Leaksville, Draper, and Spray were a part, Fieldcrest. In 1953, Marshall Field and Company sold Fieldcrest Mills, Inc. to a Boston investment company. Fieldcrest produced blankets, sheets, towns, bedspreads, and rugs, including the Karastan brand, invented in the 1920s and famous for its weave and colors, similar to hand-woven Oriental rugs.²⁴⁰

While the county's population remained overwhelmingly rural, the towns were growing. By 1953, 2,246 people called Mayodan home and 375 people lived in Ruffin. Five tobacco warehouses sold more than seven and one-half million pounds of tobacco in Stoneville, where the mayor's cousin claimed there were more Cadillacs per capita than in any other town with which he was familiar.²⁴¹ Wentworth, while it remained the center of government, had no industrial engine and saw little change in population.

Education and Religion

The school consolidation that had begun in the 1920s continued in the 1930s when building projects also created jobs. In 1932 and 1933, J.C. Lassiter, Superintendent of Madison Public Schools, corresponded with W.F. Credle from the state Division of Schoolhouse Planning and with state Superintendent A.T. Allen. Lassiter appealed for and received funding for both African American schools and white schools. In his requests and in the letters from the state granting funding, Lassiter, Allen, and Credle regularly referenced the fact that school construction would "provide the greatest possible employment for labor in this stricken section."²⁴² One request for money to complete the construction of a cafeteria was granted solely because it would generate employment opportunities and upon completion would facilitate food distribution to the "destitute."²⁴³

²⁴⁰ Butler, *Rockingham County*, 79, 81 and Eden Historic Preservation Commission and Brown, *Three Cities*, 253.

²⁴¹ Paul Pleasants, "Eight Towns of Rockingham," *The State* 28 March 1953, 26-28.

²⁴² J.C. Lassiter to A.T. Allen, November 10, 1932, General Correspondence of the Superintendent [of Public Instruction], State Archives, Raleigh, N.C.

²⁴³ W.F. Credle to J.C. Lassiter, January 10, 1933, General Correspondence of the Superintendent [of Public Instruction], State Archives, Raleigh, N.C.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 81

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Even schools without cafeterias distributed food during the early 1930s. At Wentworth Consolidated School, local women prepared soup served free from a third-floor classroom. They also sold sandwiches, cake, and cookies at reduced prices. Home economics classes supplemented this service by sometimes selling or giving away the food students made in class.²⁴⁴

As in other counties across the state, African American children attended classes in smaller, older schools and generally did not benefit from school consolidation. County school leaders did make requests for monies to improve African American schools, but in general, funding was greatly less than the financial support provided for white schools. As a result, in order to improve black schools, African American parents often had to contribute to the actual construction and furnishing of their school buildings, whereas most of the needs of the white schools were met through public funds, with some assistance from Parent-Teacher Associations and other auxiliary organizations. One Piney Fork student recalled the sacrifices made for “an old dilapidated piano”: “We had PTA meetings there and the parents would donate what little money they could and the children would sell different little things. I remember once I sold some chlorine salves and I donated the money.”²⁴⁵

Rockingham County was one of the first counties to provide busing, a program that allowed consolidation to accelerate in the 1920s and 1930s. Still, many whites walked to school and buses served no African Americans. Most African Americans traveled to school in groups, both because it provided a social outlet but also because, in some cases, groups could better protect themselves from harassment. Students heading to Piney Fork School encountered white students who threw rocks and yelled at them. Following such incidents, these pupils usually made their way along paths rather than walking on the main road.²⁴⁶

By the 1944-1945 school year, forty-seven “trucks” were delivering white students to ten county schools, which were attended by over four thousand students daily. Just over twelve hundred African American students attended classes daily, but no busing was provided, and consolidation of the African American schools had not occurred. Instead of providing buses to students, the county maintained twenty-six African American schools, 62.5% of which were one-room. Finally in 1950, several new brick school buildings were opened for African American students.

²⁴⁴ Katherine Meador Pasour, “Voices of Southern Women: Speaking from the Country Schoolhouse, 1915-1940” (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1996), 125.

²⁴⁵ Orena Lester Brodnax, interview by Katherine Meador Pasour, quoted in Pasour, “Voices,” 157.

²⁴⁶ Pasour, “Voices,” 157.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 82

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

In the early 1940s, a racially mixed population of whites and American Indians in the Goinstown community in the northwest corner of the county began agitating for a school building. The Goinstown Indians are probably descendants of the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation as pockets of Occaneechi-Saponi descendants can be found throughout North Carolina's northern Piedmont.²⁴⁷ This group may also have their origins in tribes based in southern Virginia, or they may have descended from the few Saura Indians who did not leave the region. Regardless of their lineage, the community's children needed a school building, and on October 7, 1942 county schools superintendent J. C. Colley wrote to Nathan H. Yelton, the secretary of the State School Commission, requesting approval to teach white and American Indian children in a vacant county-owned school building. Clyde A. Ervin, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, denied Colley's request on the grounds that only one distinct race could use a single school. As a result, the Goins School opened in the former Martin School (RK 1135) to serve the Native American population until they were absorbed into Stoneville's white schools in the mid-1950s.²⁴⁸ During the 1940s, Goins School's average daily attendance was twenty-three.²⁴⁹

Agriculture

Tenancy remained a major component of the county's agriculture system. In 1930, 1,391 tenants farmed forty-two percent of the county's 70,520 cultivated acres.²⁵⁰ Every January first in the 1930s, many tenants would pack up, in apparently hopeful spirits, and move to a new farm with the goal of improving their economic situation. One observer found moving day in 1933 particularly busy:

Locally this is taken to mean that farmers largely have thrown off the lethargy of depression and are making a new start, determined to do all that is humanely possible to make good crops this year. Tenants are changing landlords and landlords are changing tenants all hoping to better themselves in one way or another.²⁵¹

²⁴⁷ www.ibiblio.org/dig/html/split/report50b.html and www.geocities.com/mikenassau/oldwhat.htm.

²⁴⁸ J.C. Colley to Nathan H. Yelton October 7, 1942 and Clyde A. Ervin to J.C. Colley October 9, 1942. DPI Office of the Superintendent, General Correspondence.

²⁴⁹ Rockingham County Schools Operating Budget, 1944-1945.

²⁵⁰ United States Farm Census, 1930.

²⁵¹ *Reidsville Review* 6 January 1933, 1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 83

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

By the late 1930s, as a consequence of the Depression, the number of tenants swelled considerably to 9,306, with just 8,954 farm owners in the county.²⁵² Twenty years later, in 1950, the numbers remained about the same: nearly forty-eight percent of the county's farms were worked by tenants and only eight tenants paid their rent in cash.²⁵³

Tobacco continued as the main cash crop. In 1930, the county produced field and orchard crops valued at nearly four million dollars, with seventy-one percent of that value derived from tobacco. Cereal grains ran a distant second. Little had changed by 1950 except for the overall value: tobacco profits still comprised most of the seven million dollars worth of crops Rockingham County farmers produced.²⁵⁴

Throughout the period, the average farm size remained less than one hundred acres. In 1930, the average size farm was about eighty-eight acres. By 1953, the average size had declined to seventy-one acres; only nineteen farms were over five hundred acres.²⁵⁵

Post-World War II economic prosperity allowed farmers to mechanize, bringing about a radical change in farming at a relatively rapid pace. The tractor was the most universal improvement and many farmers took ownership of one or more by the mid-1950s. Pick-up trucks facilitated the transport of harvested crops as well as supplies and machinery. Tobacco cultivation overall was difficult to automate, but transplanting young plants was mechanized. Combines were helpful for harvesting grains and mowers and baling machines made hay production considerably less tedious.

The post-war years also saw the introduction of dairy farming. Dairying became popular across the state in the middle of the twentieth century, principally between 1920 and 1950. Its heyday occurred in Rockingham County during the 1940s and 1950s, but dairying is almost non-existent today. The Payne family operated a dairy (RK 1239) south of Madison that, like many others, started in the mid-twentieth century but eventually ceased operations as attention returned to tobacco cultivation. The county's best-preserved dairy farm ran counter to this trend. George Wright started a dairy farm (RK 1340) in 1880, well before dairying reached its peak in the county. Two of his sons and their wives built bungalows on the farm in the mid-1930s and today, three of George's grandsons continue dairy operations here.

Soybeans, first planted in North Carolina near Elizabeth City in 1915, began to become a popular crop in the state during the 1940s. Rockingham County farmers began

²⁵² North Carolina Writers Project source material.

²⁵³ United States Census, 1950.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Sharpe, "Gem," 5.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 84

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

producing the crop in the early 1950s as it became increasingly favored for livestock feed, but like dairying, soybean cultivation has tapered off to a mere trickle.²⁵⁶

Produce, particularly strawberries, orchard fruits, and other berries, began their rise to agricultural importance during the post-war years. Home demonstration clubs encouraged the use of such homegrown products. These clubs, which became popular during the 1920s, became increasingly valued community fixtures for farm women, whose social outlets were otherwise limited to church or the PTA at their children's schools. Particularly during the lean times of the 1930s, demonstration clubs provided a communal atmosphere of moral support and taught families to can fruits and vegetables and, in general, use more homegrown (less costly) food.

Rural and Small-Town Architecture

Change came especially slowly to the county's mid-century rural architecture. Styles common across much of the state, including Rockingham County's largest towns by the late 1910s and 1920s, were not commonly used in rural areas of the county until the 1930s or 1940s. The Craftsman style, derived from Gustav Stickley's magazine *The Craftsman* and the Arts and Crafts movement in the United Kingdom, emphasized informal layouts and decorative elements, such as exposed rafter and purlin ends and braces (called knee braces) in the gable ends. The style also encouraged the use of local or natural building materials, such as stone. The Rustic Revival used round logs and overlapping saddle notches to create buildings that highlighted the method of construction and emphasized "naturalness" through their use of local materials.

Similarly, the Period Cottage was slow to be accepted. Period Cottages were small houses, usually executed in brick, that took stylistic clues, such as half-timbering and expressive brickwork, from the Tudor architecture of sixteenth century England. These cottages and their larger Tudor Revival counterparts were being built in urban areas in the late 1920s and 1930s, but rural Rockingham County again lagged behind by about a decade. In the countryside, Period Cottages were not built until after World War II and continued to be popular in Rockingham County into the late 1950s, long after they made way for Ranch houses in other areas.

When bungalows finally arrived in rural Rockingham County, they embodied the standard patterns and forms seen across the rest of the state and country. The most common bungalow form was the gable-front bungalow with an attached hip-roof or shed-

²⁵⁶ http://www.ncsoy.org/History_of_Soybeans/history_of_soybeans.htm and <http://ncmuseumofhistory.org/twentieth1.html>.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 85

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

roof porch and one or two Craftsman references such as exposed raftertails or battered porch posts on brick piers. Thelma and Ernest Mabe completed their bungalow (RK 1272) in 1941, foregoing the construction of a basement to ensure the home was finished before wartime rationing started. Sited on a wooded rocky hillside in the northwest, the one-story house features a wrap-around porch with battered posts on brick piers, typical six-over-one sash windows, exposed raftertails, and an interior finished with solid pine paneling.

The Rustic Revival style gained popularity in Rockingham County in the 1930s. Round logs assembled with overlapping saddle notching and stonework on chimneys, porches, and foundations, together with painting schemes that highlighted the construction method, characterized the style. The Penns employed the style at Chinqua-Penn, as did architects designing parks as part of federal economic relief projects, but it also gained widespread acceptance during the Depression when using available materials requiring the least amount of finishing often was desirable. When Thomas and Daisy Watkins, newly arrived from Stokes County, built a home and outbuildings (RK 1276) on their farm, just west of Eden, they chose log construction primarily for its economy. However, just because the buildings were log did not mean they had to be unstylish. The Watkins left the logs round, used saddle notching, and employed peeled-bark logs for their porch posts. They completed the fashionable look by painting the logs brown and the chinking white.

Rustic Revival also proved popular for public or civic parks or camps. At the 1920s County Camp (RK 1579), later known as Camp Cherokee, the lodge, built by the Works Progress Administration in the 1930s, features full height round rock veneer chimneys, a recessed log stage, and exposed log trusses. Rustic Revival was also employed for two picnic shelters, a bathhouse, and a caretaker's cottage at the Washington Mills Park (RK 1580) built around 1950 just north of Mayodan.

Beyond the Rustic Revival, hewn log construction persisted in the countryside as a useful and economical building material. At the J. S. Wall House (RK 1182), around 1937, a tenant farmer was given permission to cut timber from the Wall lands in order to build his home. The resulting building was a one-story log dogtrot with a fieldstone chimney on the side elevation rather than the gable end. With the exception of the chimney on the rear elevation, the house is no different than the log dogtrots of the nineteenth century. Log also continued to be used for tobacco barns and other farm buildings.

The Period Cottage or English Cottage, like the bungalow, incorporated standard, nationally popular design elements. Drawing from Tudor Revival architecture, arched door, window, and porch openings and asymmetrical front gables and façade chimneys

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 86

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

were hallmarks of the Period Cottage. Most cottages were brick and occasionally half-timbering filled either with brick or stucco decorated the gables. Stone was also popular both as an accent and as the main building material. Just south of Reidsville, two examples were constructed entirely of stone (RK 1453 and 1454).

By the late 1940s and early 1950s, a few churches began replacing their sanctuaries. Wolf Island Primitive Baptist Church (RK 1393) constructed a new gable-front brick building in 1946. Differing little from the form of its mid-nineteenth predecessor, the new building has metal casement windows, flush gables, and minimized or spare Colonial Revival references.

Commercial buildings of the Depression era were few. The small number built in rural areas during that time period were generally frame gable-front buildings, similar to their late nineteenth and early twentieth century counterparts. Built in 1934, Smith's Grocery (RK 1141) in the Christian View community near the Virginia-North Carolina state line is a small, frame, gable-front building with a stepped parapet. Board-and-batten siding covers the exterior. The Smith family sold groceries, including local produce, and gasoline until the early 1970s. The closing of Smith's Grocery is typical of post-World War II rural businesses. As cars became more accessible and jobs off the farm became increasingly tempting, the population and their businesses moved to town.

As the motoring public hit the road, tourist courts popped up on the county's U.S. highways. Grogan's Tourist Court (RK 1169), on the edge of Madison overlooking the Dan River, is the most intact and fully realized example in the county. The property comprises three buildings. Two one-story guest buildings house rooms plus one-car garages and feature distinctive peaks in the parapet over each unit. The longer of the two buildings was built in stages: the first section is at the center, with the earlier of the two additions on the west end decorated with diamond-shaped glazed tiles in the cornice. The two-story commercial building across the road housed a restaurant for the convenience of the weary traveler.

Rockingham County Since 1953

Industry, Agriculture, and the Local Economy

As Rockingham County moved into and through the second half of the twentieth century, the county generally came in line with the state's economic mainstream. As in other rural areas, small farms often fell by the wayside while a handful of large-scale farmers were able to continue operations. Stores and service industries, such as hospitals, doctors' offices, and restaurants, grew steadily in number and in general importance to

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 87

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

the economy. In 1966, Rockingham Community College (RK 1581) opened its doors, expanding the educational opportunities for the local population and helping retrain workers as the county began this shift to a service-based economy.

Textile and tobacco manufacturing continued as economic mainstays but both have been in decline since the 1960s. In 1978, a Miller Brewing Company plant began operations in Eden and today, employees about 750 workers. During the 1990s in particular, layoffs in these industries put 6,355 people out of work. While textile manufacturing has been hard hit, suffering sixty-four percent of the county's layoffs between 1990 and March 2003, it is still the largest industry in the county, employing most of the thirty-six percent of the county's workforce involved in manufacturing. Although textile layoffs may have affected more people, when American Tobacco and Brown and Williamson Tobacco ceased their Reidsville operations in the mid-1990s, the city and county were dealt a hard blow. Tobacco, both its growing and manufacturing, had for so long been a source of pride that the entire county seemed to let out a sad sigh and hang its head.²⁵⁷ While Miller and other in-county employment opportunities have helped offset the impact of textile and tobacco layoffs, the county has become, in some respects, a bedroom county for Greensboro and Danville, Virginia. In 2000, while over twenty-five thousand workers stayed in the county, nearly twelve thousand made the daily commute south into Guilford County and just over thirteen hundred worked in Virginia.²⁵⁸

Reidsville, Eden (created in 1967 by merging Leaksville, Draper, and Spray), Madison, Stoneville, and Mayodan, however, have remained fairly healthy by providing the rural population with the goods and services no longer available through the county's now-defunct general stores. Wentworth has continued to function as a center of government with little commercial or industrial activity.

During the late twentieth century, as health concerns about tobacco mounted and overseas competition increased, tobacco farming decreased significantly in economic importance. Farming in general became less integral to the county's economy and more expensive as land values increased with the rising number of people willing to drive substantial distances to work in exchange for living the country life. By 2001, agriculture employed only 0.7% of the county's workforce. No other industry employed fewer people.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁷ Workforce data, including layoff statistics, provided through the Rockingham County Partnership for Economic and Tourism Development.

²⁵⁸ Butler, *Rockingham County*, 81 and 2000 commuter data provided by Rockingham County Partnership for Economic and Tourism Development.

²⁵⁹ Data provided by the Rockingham County Partnership for Economic and Tourism Development.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 88

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Truck farming of fruits and vegetables, unlike soybeans and dairy farming, remains a vital part of the county's agriculture industry today. Pick-your-own farms producing strawberries, blueberries and blackberries, and fruits such as apples and peaches have increased in number. The Tuttle family in the Shiloh community is one of the largest fruit growers in the county, with three farms and nearly three hundred acres of cucumbers, watermelon, strawberries, blackberries, and watermelons. During the last quarter of the twentieth century, model farmer and family patriarch, D. L. Tuttle, turned to produce as an alternative to the tobacco his family had historically grown. Tuttle, along with three Guilford County farmers, was instrumental in lobbying state legislators to create the Piedmont Triad Farmers Market near Greensboro.²⁶⁰

Tobacco cultivation continues on a small scale, and corn and hay are still produced. Soybeans, introduced in the first half of the twentieth century as a new crop, reached their peak production in the 1960s, but are still grown in limited quantities. Dairy and beef cattle and hogs are maintained on a few farms in small numbers, while ostriches can be found on one farm in the southeast. As it has since the first European settlers arrived, the house garden continues to play an important role in the rural diet and landscape, as do small orchards.

Architecture

During the 1950s and 1960s, the Ranch house made its way into Rockingham County, but not without competition from older styles. In particular, the Period Cottage and the Minimal Traditional house, a style with minimal Colonial Revival or Tudor Revival detailing, continued to be prevalent in rural locations long after their popularity had waned in urban areas. The Smith House (RK 1192), built in 1957, is an example of a late Period Cottage. Easily mistaken for an immediate post-World War II dwelling, the one-story, side-gable brick house features the arched doors, attic vents, and porch openings and façade chimney typical of the Period Cottage.

In the late 1960s and 1970s, the Ranch house, and its close cousin, the split-level, eclipsed other styles to become a ubiquitous dwelling in Rockingham County. Rural homes, as they had before the Civil War, were once again built in styles comparable to their urban counterparts, probably due to the increasing mobility of the county's long-time inhabitants, the influence of national magazines like *Better Homes and Gardens*, the influx of new residents, and perhaps to the exposure to national trends brought into people's homes by their televisions. With the introduction of new housing types and styles throughout the end of the twentieth century, the rural housing stock has kept pace

²⁶⁰ *News and Record* (Greensboro), July 11, 2002.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 89

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

with trends and fashions in the towns. This is also true for commercial buildings, schools, and places of worship.

Modernist architecture has its roots in designs from the 1920s and 1930s but it does not appear in mainstream Rockingham County until the 1950s and 1960s. Modernism incorporates flat roofs, horizontal lines, long planes of blank wall or walls of windows, and sleek materials like marble and steel or natural woods and stone. One of the better examples of Modernist architecture in the county stands in Mayodan. Completed in 1954, the Washington Mills YMCA (RK 1428) was built by the company (formerly Mayo Mills) for its employees. The building exhibits a horizontal-orientation, flat roof, and simple square cast concrete ornament by the main entrance.

In the crossroads community of Bethany, southeast of Madison, a gym was added to the school's campus (RK 1318) in 1960. The striking barrel vault building features gently arched I-beams that emerge from the roofing material above the side walls to descend, exposed, into the earth. Plate glass and colored enameled panels sheathe the façade and the lobby retains original lighting fixtures. The building stands as the best example of Modernism in rural Rockingham County.

Rockingham Community College (RK 1581) is also part of expression in the county of the national Modernist movement. The park-like layout was designed in 1964 and 1965 with the car-driving public in mind: there is plenty of parking but no dorms. The one- and two-story buildings are brick with flat roofs, square concrete columns, and projecting concrete panels flanking slender windows. The campus is typical of many post-World War II suburban college campuses, sharing a sprawling layout, grassy lawns, Modernist buildings, and commodious parking areas with schools such as Methodist College in Fayetteville and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

A slow change in the county's architecture has been the obsolescence and subsequent decay of the log tobacco barn. Occasionally, a farmer will "put up" one barn full of tobacco in an old barn and maintain their log barns either for appearance or for storage, but essentially all of the county's tobacco has been cured since the 1990s in low, metal, propane-heated "barns," commonly called bulk barns. Other metal storage buildings are also taking the place of frame or log barns, although many farmers still maintain traditional barns and cribs.

Conclusion

Over two hundred fifty years have passed since European settlers began arriving in Rockingham County, and during that time, industry, roads, and buildings have changed the landscape and character of the county. Towns have formed, prospered, and declined,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 90

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

and while some are still thriving, others may have yet to see their most bountiful days. Wentworth remains as it always has, the county's governmental and educational center with a thriving community college and growing administration complex. Ruffin, once a bustling railroad town, sits quietly at the edge of the tracks. With the destruction of all of its commercial buildings and most of its historic dwellings, Price is almost nonexistent. Madison, Mayodan, and Stoneville have retained their places as small commercial hubs, although they, like the county generally, are more often places for people to live when not working in jobs elsewhere. Eden and Reidsville are commercial and industrial centers. Rural areas have become gradually more populated and cultivated fields and occupied pastures, while still typical, are less common sights.

Still, much remains the same. As it has done for untold years, Mayo Mountain watches the Mayo River's descent to the Dan whose bottomlands have unfailingly produced cornucopias of wheat, corn, tobacco, and vegetables since the Sauras lived on its banks. The northwest is as rugged as it was when Byrd traversed the area and the southeast's rolling lands are as pastoral and inviting as they were when settlers built their first log houses. And, while new buildings spring up everyday, log houses and simple frame dwellings of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are still among the most common house forms in the county.

Alexander Sneed, who described the county in an 1810 article, might marvel at U.S. Highway 220 and the population of over ninety thousand, but he would also see that his prediction of large mills, built "much to the advantage of the citizens generally" was accurate. Sneed would find the same hills, creeks, rivers, and crops and a few of the same buildings, but perhaps most importantly and possibly most pleasing to him, he would find on the county's doorsteps and front porches and in her backyards and fields, that the population's propensity for welcoming strangers and their enjoyment of "snug" rather than "splendid" living is undiminished.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 91

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Associated Property Types

Property Type 1: Farm Complexes

Property Type 2: Houses

A. Houses Built Before 1861

Log
Frame
Brick

B. Houses Built After 1861

Log
Frame
Brick

Property Type 3: Institutional Buildings

A. Churches
B. Schools
C. Government Buildings

Property Type 4: Commercial Buildings

Property Type 5: Industrial Buildings and Structures

*Indicates a property on the National Register or Study List in more than one category.

Property Type 1: Farm Complexes

Introduction

Most of the buildings recorded in this survey are dwellings without outbuildings or with only one or two outbuildings, but nearly all of these houses were originally part of a farm complex, an arrangement of domestic and agricultural buildings necessary to support life in the countryside. Before 1953, most people in rural Rockingham County

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 92

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

lived within such a complex. Just over seventy farm complexes, or sixteen percent of the total number of documented sites, were recorded; of those, sixty were built after the Civil War.

Early nineteenth-century farms were usually self-sufficient, subsistence operations growing few or no cash crops, but just before the Civil War, and particularly after, farms started producing more and more tobacco and fewer food crops. Throughout Rockingham County's history, farms were small, usually averaging less than one hundred acres in size with hills and creeks bounding irregularly shaped fields. Families worked their own fields, although some white families could afford slaves before the Civil War; afterwards, tenancy and sharecropping became common. Large-scale agriculture was not characteristic of the county's farming system, despite the fact that there were several sizeable Dan River plantations and there have always been several landowners who held numerous discontinuous farms across the county.

Since the mid-twentieth century, as farming has become less profitable and more non-farmers have moved into rural areas, farmland has been divided into subdivisions and older outbuildings and sometimes the main house have been demolished, neglected, or replaced. Farm complexes, once the standard residential unit beyond the city limits of Madison, Eden, and Reidsville, have become increasingly rare.

Farm complexes are unique from other property types because of the range of construction dates found within a single site. Complexes in which the house and all the outbuildings were constructed around the same time are nearly nonexistent; only a handful of examples were documented, all from the mid-twentieth century. The farmhouse may date from any time period but most existing outbuildings were built in the twentieth century, although some nineteenth-century survivors do occur. As a result, a farm complex may have a date range that spans more than one hundred years.

Description

Farm complexes are made up of several components that fall into three principal categories: the house, outbuildings, and landscape, which includes fields, pastures, streams, hills, ravines, and the farmyard behind the dwelling where the domestic outbuildings and some of the agricultural outbuildings stand and where many of the activities of daily life occurred. A dwelling is nearly always the focal point of the farm, although occasionally it may be relatively new or so altered that it is actually less significant than the collection of outbuildings. At the Joyce-Alley Farm (RK 1176), fifteen outbuildings are scattered around two dwellings, one of which dates to the late twentieth century. The other is an early hall-parlor house to which a Craftsman-style

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 93

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

addition and renovations were made in 1927. While the homes are not the oldest or most pristine examples of Rockingham County architecture, the outbuildings are significant for their number, age, and excellent state of repair. All are nineteenth- or early twentieth-century buildings and include log tobacco barns, a nubbin crib in which sub-standard corn and corn scraps were stored, various other cribs, log barns, a log kitchen, a frame corncrib, chicken sheds or coops, and a garage.

The Witty House (RK 1353) is one of the oldest and best agricultural complexes in the county because it retains both the original dwelling and an outstanding collection of nineteenth-century log outbuildings. Ezekiel and Martha Williams Witty built a two-story log house here in 1836. Around 1900, their descendants added a frame gabled wing. With the exception of the log tobacco packhouse and the frame garage, all the outbuildings were built before 1910. Directly behind the house are two log smokehouses with stone chinking and a log kitchen with a wide fieldstone and brick chimney. To the east and northeast, beyond the domestic outbuildings, are a double-crib corncrib, a large asymmetrical double-crib barn, and another log crib. To the south, across the original roadbed, stand the garage, a tall log tobacco packhouse, and a log granary.

Another early example of a farmstead retaining both an early dwelling and early outbuildings is the McCollum House (RK 1351). The two-story dwelling may have been constructed as early as 1807, but was certainly built by 1840. To the rear is a log smokehouse with a dovecote and a log trough in which meat was salt-cured. Slightly downhill from the smoke house is a log slave house, one of the very few examples in the county. The squat dwelling with a now-collapsed fieldstone chimney has one room with a loft that was apparently used for weaving, as a large loom remains in that space. Both the smokehouse and slave house are early buildings that may be contemporary with the house's original construction. The farm road leading to tobacco fields passes in front of the house. Across this road are two log corncribs and down the lane to the west, a log tobacco packhouse and a log tobacco barn stand on the edge of cultivated fields. The corncribs and tobacco buildings are likely late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century structures. Another early outbuilding, a granary or smokehouse, stands at the John Lindsay House (RK 1201) and its framing suggests it was built in the late 1830s, at the time the house was constructed.

More often, however, extant outbuildings are twentieth-century structures that replaced older deteriorated or obsolete buildings. When Henry and Hallie Claybrooks purchased the Smith-Claybrooks Farm (RK 1140) in 1942, the single-pen log house had already been expanded to its present T-shaped form and older outbuildings were probably standing. All the outbuildings standing today, however, with the exception of a frame

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 94

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

garage, were built by the Claybrooks after 1942. Randomly scattered, but moving progressively farther from the house, these include a pavilion over the well, a board-and-batten shed, a frame corncrib, a frame chicken house, a frame side-gable barn for animals, and a log tobacco barn. A "home garden" was situated on the north side of the house as well. Down a dirt track, within sight of the house, is a cultivated field and two more log tobacco barns.

Farm complex dependences can be divided into two categories: domestic outbuildings associated with the "human" operations of the household and agricultural outbuildings associated with the production of crops and the care of livestock. Domestic outbuildings include smokehouses, kitchens, privies, can houses, washhouses, and well houses and occasionally small greenhouses and potting sheds for the cultivation of flowers. These are usually located close to the back of the house. Agricultural outbuildings support the operations of the farm and are usually located farther from the house. Log cribs for storing corn and granaries are common. Larger barns, either of frame or log construction, are for storing farm implements and sheltering livestock. Coops and houses for chickens as well as a shed or crib within a fenced pen for hogs are also part of the standard complement of outbuildings.

In Rockingham County, the majority of farmers produced tobacco, so tobacco-related buildings are usually part of the county's farm complexes. Tobacco barns for curing harvested leaves are one of the most common fixtures in the rural landscape. These barns are almost always log, although frame and concrete block were used in the mid- and late twentieth century. While some may stand close to the farm dwelling, they are usually arranged either singly or in groups of two or three beside a field. Log or frame tobacco packhouses are seen at some complexes. Packhouses are usually located near the house either with agricultural outbuildings that are consistently closer to the house, such as corncribs or chicken houses, or with tobacco curing barns when those barns are sited near the main house.

In general, Rockingham County farm complexes follow informal layouts that, while different at each site, share some commonalities. The dwelling is usually located at the front of the complex, most often close to and facing the main road or facing what was the main road at the time of construction. In a few examples, the dwelling is located at the end of a drive at the back of a field. Immediately behind the house are the domestic buildings, usually arranged in a rough U-shape or a line. Farther away in a cluster or scattered, either behind or to one side of the dwelling, are the agricultural outbuildings. Tobacco barns may be part of this arrangement but are also found among the fields, close to the crops.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 95

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Landscape features are essential elements of farm complexes. At the county's larger plantations, and in some cases at smaller farms, the landscape sometimes included formal gardens in the yard around the dwelling. The boxwoods and cedars at the Dr. Samuel Spencer House ruins (RK 1188) are now overgrown rectangles, circle, and rows, but their discernible patterns render them the best example of mid-nineteenth formal landscape design in the county. On a much smaller scale, low boxwoods at the turn-of-the-twentieth-century Pritchett House (RK 1546) are arranged in an open diamond shape. The now-neglected gardens installed by the Penns in the 1930s around the mid-nineteenth century house at Mulberry Island (RK 1123) incorporate extensive terracing, pools, and formal planting beds.

The landscape at most farms, however, lacks such formal elements and is shaped primarily by nature. Streams or creeks skirt or cross most farms, while more sizeable farms are usually located on the Dan River. Soil in the bottomlands is a rich, dark, sandy loam while that of the upland areas is generally clay, which becomes rockier in the hillier northwest quadrant of the county. A 1926 USDA Soil Survey found that "smaller streams and numerous perennial and intermittent branches extend to all parts of the county, giving every farm one or more drainage outlets and effecting complete and thorough drainage of the up lands."²⁶⁵

Most farms contain irregularly shaped cultivated fields, often on three sides of the dwelling and farmyard. Fields are generally fairly small, conforming to waterways and hills, unless located in a wide swath of bottomland along a river. Terracing, to create flat planes on hillsides upon which crops could be raised with less soil erosion, was occasionally employed in the hillier northwest. Small vegetable and flower garden plots, usually located close to the house, were sometimes enclosed with wire mesh or chicken-wire fencing. Most farms contained wooded tracts, and complexes with livestock had pastureland enclosed with wire, rail, or later electric fencing. While tobacco farming's economic impact is now greatly reduced from earlier years, its continued use of small, irregularly shaped fields bounded by wooded tracts, domestic yards, and farm roads remains one of the most striking and identifying features of the county's landscape.

The Dix Farm (RK 1491) typifies the Rockingham County farm of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Dix dwelling faces a cultivated field and the main road beyond. A dirt farm road runs along the north side of this field and past the north side of the house to the fields beyond. Immediately behind the log house is a log

²⁶⁵ R. C. Jurney, *USDA Soil Survey of Rockingham County* (Washington D.C.: United States Department of Agriculture, 1926), 2.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 96

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

gable-front smokehouse with square notching. The other outbuildings stand in a neat row on the other side of the farm road. Closest to the house are a frame corncrib and a gable-front log barn used for storage. Continuing away from the house are a frame tobacco packhouse and a line of three log tobacco barns.

At the Rob Benton Joyce Farm (RK 1156), the late nineteenth-century I-house is the centerpiece of an impressive collection of early twentieth-century outbuildings that includes the county's most extensive groups of domestic dependencies. In a row perpendicular to the house stand a washhouse, milk house, and a potting shed. A gable-front "curing house" for pork faces the back of the main house and with the other domestic buildings creates a courtyard. Farther away from the house, but still part of the domestic group, is a woodshed. Still farther away from the house, scattered loosely around the distant edge of the yard, are agricultural buildings: a tractor shed, a tall, narrow frame corncrib, a chicken house, and one of the farm's log tobacco barns. A privy also stands among the agricultural buildings, just behind which, the property is wooded and the grade drops sharply to a stream. In front of the house, the land slopes gently and is not currently cultivated, but a log tobacco barn and a log tobacco packhouse standing down the hill indicate that this meadow area was cultivated at one time. Across the road are more rolling cultivated fields and another log tobacco barn.

The later John Galloway Hand Farm (RK 1216) is on a smaller scale. Hand built his single-pen home in 1910 and his son later made a frame addition to the north. A row of small outbuildings is arranged in a slightly curving line that follows the edge of a gentle slope in the land. In order, moving away from the house, they include a well, granary, log corncrib, shed, and log tobacco barn.

Another early twentieth-century example is the Joe Frank Smith Farm (RK 1142). In 1923 or 1924, Smith built his two-story home and began constructing associated domestic and agricultural outbuildings. Close to the rear elevation are a garage and a log smokehouse with a loft. A vegetable garden is behind those two buildings and beyond the garden are a privy, a frame gable-front stable and feed barn, two sheds, a log corncrib and a log tobacco packhouse.

Masonry construction was not commonly used on farms. Only a handful of masonry houses were built in rural Rockingham County before the 1940s when brick and stone veneering became more popular for Minimal Traditional, Period Cottage, and Ranch houses. The most common antebellum masonry buildings outside Madison, Eden, and Reidsville, of which four examples remain, are outbuildings. The Patrick Springhouse (RK 999), a diminutive, side-gable building built in 1824, is the only identified example in the county of load-bearing stone construction. At Locust Point, a

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 97

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

mid-nineteenth-century house, fire destroyed the frame dwelling in the late 1990s, but the small side-gable brick kitchen remains, and at Mulberry Island (RK 1123), another mid-nineteenth-century plantation, a gable-front brick kitchen or smokehouse, with a steeply pitched roof and dovecote, stands behind the frame house. At Rose Bank (RK 1229), one of three antebellum brick homes in the county, a side-gable brick post office building stands in the front yard. After the Civil War, masonry was not used for outbuildings until a handful of owners began building small rock or brick veneer outhouses in the early and mid-twentieth century like the rock veneer wellhouses at the Paschal Farm (RK 1435) and a bungalow (RK 1288) near Settle's Bridge.

Dairying in Rockingham County enjoyed a brief era of popularity in the first half of the twentieth century and added two distinct outbuildings to the landscape: the gambrel roof dairy barn and the silo. In 1880, George Wright (RK 1340) started the earliest dairy surveyed, well before dairying reached its peak in the county. Two of his sons and their wives built bungalows on the farm in the mid-1930s and today, three of George's grandsons continue dairying here. The complex consists of George Wright's home, built or expanded from a single-pen log dwelling around the time of his 1904 marriage. Outbuildings include domestic groups at each house as well as several feed barns, two large gambrel roof barns, and a silo.

The Wright Farm, however, was unusual, as most of Rockingham County's dairy farms did not begin as such. Instead, they were tobacco farms converted to dairying, so farm buildings and their arrangements do not differ from other farms, with the exception of the introduction of the silo and gambrel roof dairy barn. A more typical example is the John and Bessie Wall Farm (RK 1325) near Bakers Crossroads, southwest of Wentworth. The Walls built a one-story Craftsman style bungalow in 1927 and began farming tobacco. Their son inherited the house and started a dairy farm on the property in the mid-twentieth century. Directly behind the house, a smokehouse with a prominent overhanging roof stands to the east. Further east moving down a gentle slope are a shed, corncrib, and large gambrel roof dairy barn. The Wall Farm is still an operating dairy and the dairy barn is still in use. These outbuildings stand in a grove of trees with pastureland spreading out behind them and to the south of the house. The Thomas and Polly Payne Farm (RK 1239), south of Madison, also began as a tobacco farm, in the mid-1800s, and Payne descendants converted it to a dairy farm in the mid-1900s.

While it was uncommon for outbuildings to stylistically match or complement the farm dwelling, a few farmers took those steps. Thomas and Daisy Watkins (RK 1276) built their home and outbuildings in the early 1930s. They used log construction with saddle notching and round logs to give the house an emphatically Rustic Revival style.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 98

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Similarly, the Watkins' barn and smokehouse are also built with matching round logs with overlapping saddle notching.

An anomaly within the traditional farming practices and patterns of Rockingham County is Chinqua-Penn (RK 884, NR 1993). The complex, constructed mostly in the 1920s and 1930s as the home and vision of Jeff and Betsy Penn, originally sprawled across over one thousand acres between Wentworth and Reidsville. In addition to a mansion, formal and informal landscape designs, and buildings and structures for lavish entertaining, the Penns built Rustic Revival and Craftsman style barns, dwellings for farm hands, and other agricultural buildings that number over thirty. Jeff Penn considered his estate a demonstration farm from which the latest crop and livestock technology could be disseminated. Penn, known throughout the South as a modern dairy farmer, ardently believed local farmers should turn away from tobacco. Betsy Penn's interest in forestry led her to oversee and administer up-to-date forestry techniques and to make the estate a wildlife sanctuary. Today, North Carolina State University manages a research station on the property, continuing the Penns' model farming ideals.²⁶⁶

Study List properties

Chinqua-Penn Boundary Expansion, Reidsville vicinity (RK 884, SL)
Dalton Farm, Ellisboro vicinity (RK 1574, SL)
Dix Farm, Eden vicinity (RK 1491, SL)
Tom Fuquay Farm, Intelligence vicinity (RK 1255, SL)
Garrett Farm and Tobacco Factory, Ayersville vicinity (RK 1265, SL)*
Johnson-Stokes Farm, Ruffin vicinity (RK 1506, SL)
Joyce-Alley Farms, Mayodan vicinity (RK 1176, SL)
Rob Benton Joyce House, Ayersville vicinity (RK 1156, SL)
McCollum Farm, Madison vicinity (RK 1351, SL)
Patrick Spring House, Reidsville vicinity (RK 999, SL)
Powell Farm and Store, Ruffin vicinity (RK 1420 and RK 1421, SL)
Sparks Farm, Ruffin vicinity (RK 1495, SL)
Thacker-Cross Farm, Reidsville vicinity (RK 1534, SL)
John and Bessie Wall Farm, Wentworth vicinity (RK 1325, SL)
Thomas and Daisy Watkins Farm, Eden vicinity (RK 1276, SL)

²⁶⁶ Helen Walton, "Chinqua-Penn Plantation Amendment to the 1993 Nomination," North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office Study List Application, 1996.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 99

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Williams-Haynes House, Reidsville vicinity (RK 1575, SL)
Witty House, Stokesdale vicinity (RK 1353, SL)
Wright-Chandler Farm, Ruffin vicinity (RK 1563, SL)
Wright Dairy Farm, Reidsville vicinity (RK 1340, SL)

Significance

The historic farm complexes of Rockingham County are potentially eligible for National Register designation under criterion A for significance in the history of agriculture and criterion C for architectural significance and the quality of craftsmanship of buildings or as representative examples of early or rare building techniques. The county's historic farms document the important role agriculture played in the county's history, particularly the county's place within the bright-leaf tobacco culture. Farm complexes also reflect the changes that took place in local agriculture over time, the importance of self-sufficiency, even in a cash crop society, and the roles of men and women on the farm at complexes where outbuildings are arranged in separate domestic and agriculture groups. Farms are identifiable by their numerous small outbuildings related to domestic food storage and preparation, livestock care, grain or crop storage, and often, the harvesting or processing of a cash crop. Most examples also retain patterns of cultivated or open fields, fences, farm roads, and a dwelling. While a plantation system, typified by a commodious main house and a large collection of dependencies, flourished along the Dan River, nearly all the outbuildings associated with that system have been lost so that the remaining Dan River plantations, with the exception of the John Lindsay Farm, can no longer be considered farm complexes.

Registration Requirements

In order for a farm in Rockingham County to be eligible for listing in the National Register, it must meet certain registration requirements. The farm complex derives its integrity and significance from the presence of many components rather than the integrity or significance of a single part. Thus, modifications, such as the addition of new siding material to the exteriors of some farm buildings or the relocation of buildings within the complex, do not negatively affect the integrity of the complex as long as the general layout and most of the original buildings and materials survive. Such changes are often important indicators of the farm's evolution and should be recorded as part of a nomination. In addition, most of the farm's buildings, structures, and field patterns should be fifty years old or older.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 100

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

The integrity threshold for dwellings that are part of a complex is lower than that applied to individual houses. Exterior remodeling, including replacing or covering the original siding, does not destroy integrity as long as the building retains its overall form, fenestration, and identifying details. Interior integrity is desirable but not essential. In cases of collections of very early outbuildings or collections of extensive number and variety, the integrity or presence of a dwelling may not be required for a farm's eligibility. A dwelling without integrity would be considered a non-contributing element of the complex.

Property Type 2: Houses

Introduction

Because the Civil War marks a distinct turning point in Rockingham County's architecture and economy, this property type has been divided into two time periods: houses built before 1861 and houses built after 1861. Of the recorded buildings, ninety, or about twenty-one percent, were built before 1861; three hundred forty-three were built after.

Before the Civil War, houses in the countryside were equally as fashionable and up-to-date as in-town dwellings. Builders and homeowners kept up with fashionable trends. Very early dwellings exhibit late Georgian design elements while Federal style treatments were applied liberally during the first thirty years of the nineteenth century. The Greek Revival style was first employed with Federal patterns before emerging into its own during the late 1840s. After the Civil War, however, rural house and church builders held on to antebellum aesthetics and ceased or slowed accepting nationally or regionally popular trends, while people living in towns, except for those in mill housing, tended to keep up with architectural changes. This gap widened further in the first half of the twentieth century as rural dwellers were reluctant to ascribe to the Queen Anne and Italianate styles, which became popular in the county's larger towns during the late 1800s. Although these new styles eventually gained acceptance in the countryside, they were not applied with the same high-style vigor seen in towns. Rather than employing asymmetry, irregular footprints, and elaborate rooflines, rural builders simply attached Italianate and Queen Anne decorative elements to traditional forms. The gap between rural and urban stylishness did not stop growing until the second half of the twentieth century when the automobile and more forms of mass communication allowed people in rural and urban areas to be equally connected to national trends.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 101

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

One feature that received common treatment in all rural houses built before the early twentieth century was the chimney. Most chimneys built in Rockingham County outside Madison, Eden, and Reidsville were single-shouldered structures, constructed on the exterior of the dwelling of fieldstone with brick stacks that were either original or replacements of earlier stone stacks. Chimney stacks, whether brick or stone, were almost always built as freestanding, standing away from the house, and only occasionally did chimneys rise from the interior. Chimneys entirely of brick were generally luxuries that most people could not or chose not to afford, but as the twentieth century progressed, chimneys became more commonly built entirely of brick and were more often located on the interior. Unusual features observed within the existing housing stock were decorative patterns of glazed headers, tumbled shoulders, paved shoulders, and double shouldering.

Description

A. Houses Built Before 1861

Surviving houses built before 1861 in Rockingham County range from one-room log dwellings to high style Federal and Greek Revival homes. In-between are two-room hall-parlor homes and center-hall I-houses with varying levels of style and a wide array of finishes and craftsmanship. While European settlement began in the mid-eighteenth century, homes from this period are not known to survive. Relative to what their original numbers probably were, dwellings built before the 1840s survive in small numbers due to neglect or intentional destruction. The typical pre-1840s house in Rockingham County was probably the one-room log house, but of the surviving examples, the typical house is a one-and-a-half-story, log or frame, hall-parlor dwelling with finishes reflecting the owner's economic status and fashionableness.

Hall-parlor was the plan-of-choice for the county's early wealthy planters, and like the one-room house, it was executed in both log and frame. Rectangular in shape, the hall-parlor house was divided into two spaces. The hall was the more finely finished "public" room into which the front door (if there was only one) opens. In Rockingham County, the stair to the upper full story or half-story was located against the interior dividing wall. The stair was always enclosed and the door to it opened into the hall. Within the surviving housing stock, the plan is most often seen in a one-and-a-half-story height, but it also occurs in two-story homes. While most popular in the early nineteenth century, the plan was constructed in Rockingham County into the 1850s.

Houses built between the 1840s and the outbreak of the Civil War survive more often, but many from that period are lost. While the hall-parlor house remained popular up to the Civil War, the I-house gained acceptance in the 1840s and dominance in the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 102

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

1850s. The I-house is a two-story dwelling with a passage in the center flanked by one room on each side. The hall creates a stricter division of space in which the visitor does not immediately enter into the family's personal rooms. The exterior is always arranged with the long side of the house presented to the road, creating the appearance of a larger dwelling. Finishes during this period moved away from Federal style influences to pure Greek Revival characteristics with tall baseboards, clean and simple window and door surrounds, and heavy post-and-lintel mantelpieces sometimes featuring raised panels or Greek keys.

The pre-war survivors, particularly those from the first decades of the nineteenth century, are likely some of the best and most well constructed dwellings of their day. They are heavy timber frame dwellings or finely crafted log houses with strong notching usually covered, or historically covered, with weatherboards—all features that contributed to their survival. Homes that have remained in the ownership of the family that built them and those located in areas less affected by twentieth-century development have fared the best.

Log Houses

Plentiful timber made log the most common and accessible construction method of the first half of the nineteenth century. Roughly twenty-four percent of the pre-1861 sites recorded during the survey are log buildings. People of all income levels, especially before the 1840s or 1850s, used it to build their houses; even Governor Alexander Martin's home on the Dan River was log. During the antebellum period, log slowly began to be associated with the less affluent, but up to the Civil War, it was the most common material building method, regardless of the owner's status.

Most early log houses had a one-room plan, also called a single pen, and most were slightly rectangular with a few being nearly square. If not exhibiting a single-pen plan, log houses were commonly built with a hall-parlor plan in which the interior partition wall was either a frame structure or a log wall. In a few examples, a broad side-gable roof that extended over engaged or recessed front and back porches sheltered the single-pen or hall-parlor plan, creating a house called a coastal plain cottage. The name is an informal moniker that describes a dwelling typically, but not exclusively, found in the eastern section of North Carolina. Often, an enclosed room may be present on one or both of the porches.

Log house were usually built to a height of one- or one-and-a-half-stories; two-story log houses were rare, based on the surviving examples. V-notching was far and away the most common method of joining logs at a log building's corner. Half-

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 103

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

dovetailing was not rare but was less prevalent than V-notching. Full dovetail notches were not employed as frequently as half-dovetailing, but the method was not unusual. Diamond notching was very rare; of the recorded buildings with exposed logs, diamond notching was only seen at one, at the Crowder House (RK 1549). Square and saddle notching were observed only in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century houses. Occasionally, flat fieldstones were wedged between logs for chinking, but generally the standard chinking material was red clay mud mixed in varying ratios with straw, pebbles, or small rocks.

A single-pen house (RK 1497) near the Oregon Hill community may be one of the oldest extant log houses in Rockingham County. Based on its verticality, steeply pitched roof, flush gable ends, and boxed cornice, the house may have been built as early as 1800. Although it is a very small house, the craftsmanship displayed both in wood and masonry is expert. A central front door punctuates the façade and a window opening pierces one gable end. Its hewn logs are assembled with V-notching at the corners. A well-constructed fieldstone chimney and a second window occupy the other gable end. The side-gable roof terminates at flush gable ends and a boxed cornice extends across the front and rear elevations. Where they have not decayed or been removed, weatherboards cover the exterior, and the house stands on a fieldstone foundation. A shed room on the rear elevation is an early addition. Both the shed room and the main room are finished with plaster.

Another example of a well-built, early log house stands in the community of Ayersville. The Martin-Lewis House (RK 1132) was probably built in the 1820s, as suggested by some of its decorative details such as a few beaded weatherboards and interior beaded flushboards and ceiling joists. Built of substantial hewn logs with V-notched corners, the house is covered in weatherboards, some of which are beaded. The house also has the unusual and expensive feature of brick chimneys on the flush gable ends. The hall-parlor plan has an unusual original log partition wall (most documented examples are frame). A thin partition wall was added in the late nineteenth century to create a center hall. The heated upper half-story is reached via an enclosed winder stair that begins by the front door. The interior door is batten with beaded planks. Flush beaded planks sheathe the walls and the exposed ceiling joists are also beaded.

About five documented antebellum log dwellings illustrate the common practice of using two freestanding log pens, one for living and one presumably for cooking. While detached kitchens of log or frame paired with a log or frame house are frequent, they usually were connected by a common roof that created a dogtrot passage in-between. In this form, however, the detached pens are normally not connected at all, though they

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 104

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

stand very close to each other. Unlike a dogtrot or saddlebag, in which the pens are joined by a common roof, the most frequent configuration of log houses comprising more than one pen, each pen has its own gable roof and they sit adjacent to each other, either positioned so that they create a right angle or situated side by side with the gabled rooflines perpendicular to one another. In some cases, only a matter of inches is left between the two buildings. Usually, the buildings are not distinguished by a difference in exterior or interior finishes although one pen is sometimes taller than the other. The form has been documented in a small number of antebellum examples but becomes more common after the war.

The earliest documented example of this arrangement of two detached log pens is the Crowder House (RK 1594), probably built around 1830, although it is somewhat atypical, having a breezeway connecting the pens, which appear to have been built at different times. The earlier of the two pens contains the main living section with a log shed room across the rear. The logs in the main room are assembled with one of the few examples of diamond notching found in the county. A broad side-gable roof shelters the main room, rear shed room, and porch, creating a coastal plain cottage. A fieldstone chimney stands on one gable end and only one small six-over-six sash window lights the main room. The front porch also extends four or five feet to the other pen, creating the breezeway. The second pen, assembled with square notching, is less well-finished and was probably built in the later 1800s.

Another plan executed in both log and frame and built in Rockingham County for at least a century beginning in the early 1800s is the one-over-one house. This dwelling, found in western Caswell County as well as eastern and southeastern Rockingham County, consists of a one-room footprint with two stories. In log examples, the second floor is sometimes an addition while frame one-over-one houses were usually built as a piece. An early log example is the McCollum House (RK 1351), important not only as a rare surviving example of an early one-over-one house, but also as an extremely rare early nineteenth-century, two-story log dwelling. The building may have been constructed as early as 1807, but was certainly finished by 1840. The original section has only one room on each floor with a narrow enclosed stair connecting them. Whitewash finished both rooms and a Federal mantelpiece occupies one wall in the downstairs room. A two-panel Greek Revival door connects the original section to an early one-and-a-half-story log addition. Weatherboards, boxed cornices, and flush gable ends finish the exterior of both sections.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 105

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Frame Houses

Frame construction evolved and developed simultaneously with log, beginning with frame houses constructed almost from the time European settlers began arriving. Through 1860, frame houses were heavy timber frame structures built with one-room, hall-parlor, center-hall, and coastal plain cottage plans. Hall-parlor and one-room plans were open plans, meaning the house was more open or accessible than a house with a center hall. Visitors and occupants entered directly into the only room or the main room, without first passing through a hallway, which allowed for greater control of visitors and more privacy for the family. In many hall-parlor houses, guests could enter directly into either room because there were two front doors, usually of equal embellishment.

Before the late 1840s and 1850s, when the I-house form gained popularity, one- and one-and-a-half-story, single-pile dwellings were, by far, the most common house form. Until the rise of the I-house, two-story frame dwellings with center-hall plans were rare and were only built by the county's most elite. As the 1840s came to an end and the center-hall plan became more accessible and accepted, it was built in antebellum rural Rockingham County, nearly without fail, in a two-story, I-house form. Only one antebellum one-story center-hall example has been documented (RK 1520). Hall-parlor and one-room plans, however, were built to both heights, although here, too, only the wealthy built two-story dwellings. Double-pile houses, or those more than one room deep, are extremely rare. Nearly every house built before the Civil War was only one room deep, although a one- or two-room rear gabled ell, either original or an addition, often provided a little extra space. Rear shed rooms were almost always additions in the documented examples. Historic photographs show that the Galloway House and the Spencer House (RK 1188), now destroyed or ruinous, were double-pile dwellings. Today, Cascade Plantation (RK 1, NR 1975) is the only known, relatively intact, double-pile house built before the Civil War outside Madison, Eden, and Reidsville.

Stylistically, before the 1840s, the two types, log and frame, were finished to the same level and executed with equal fashion consciousness. Late Georgian, Federal, and later, Greek Revival design elements were applied as the owner's economic status allowed. During the 1840s, frame slowly eclipsed log as the favored building method for residents of greater means, and although the shift was not complete until after the Civil War, log eventually became the construction method for poorer farmers. Interior finishes for frame houses during all decades before the Civil War typically included flushboard sheathing, occasionally with bead detailing and plain or reeded door and window surrounds. Wainscoting generally consisted of wide, flat panels between baseboards and chair rails, although raised panels occur in some high-style examples. Mantelpieces were

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 106

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

usually simple post-and-lintel arrangements sometimes adorned with decorative elements of the time period. Plaster was not uncommon but was generally reserved for the wealthier planters. Exterior doors before the 1840s usually had six or sometimes eight raised or flat panels, but by the 1850s, the two-panel Greek Revival door was typical. Interior doors sometimes had the same panel arrangements but were often much simpler batten doors.

In the existing housing stock, one-room frame dwellings are rare; most one-room houses are log. Only three or four one-room frame house built before 1860 were recorded, although at least two one-over-one houses (two-story dwellings with only one room on each floor) are thought to date to before 1860. One of the most well-built and finely-detailed (despite a loss of interior features) pre-1860 one-room frame houses documented is the Robert Means House (RK 1199), located in the northwest corner of the county and probably built for Means around 1800, making it one of the oldest homes in the county. Although the interior finishes have been lost or covered over, the one-story house retains its original, steeply pitched side-gable roof, flush gable ends, a boxed cornice, and a fieldstone chimney. A six-over-six sash window and a front door pierce the facade. Attached to the rear is a shed room. A twentieth-century addition of about the same square footage as the original room stands on one gable end.

Among the surviving pre-1860 houses in Rockingham County, the most common plan is the hall-parlor dwelling, which was usually built for very successful planters but was also executed in smaller versions for more middling farmers. The Henry Scales House (RK 1001) is an old and nearly unaltered example of the one-and-a-half-story hall-parlor house and the earliest dwelling outside Madison, Reidsville, and Eden for which a construction date (1799) can be firmly established. Built with a heavy timber frame filled with brick noggin, the house features well-executed but severely deteriorated late Georgian-Federal transitional woodwork. The side-gable roof shelters the main house and the back porch. Although now entirely enclosed, the back porch originally had an enclosed porch room on one end. The front porch has a shed roof and its porch room is probably a later alteration. The gable ends are flush and the cornice is boxed. Two impressive gable-end chimneys feature paved double shoulders and Flemish bond brickwork with glazed headers arranged in lozenge patterns. One chimney brick is inscribed "1799." Scales was one of the wealthier residents of the county in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. His ownership of thirteen enslaved workers put him in the three percent of the population that owned more than ten slaves in 1790.

Now named for its twentieth-century owners, the John and Chattie Martin House (RK 1145) probably dates from the 1840s and was likely built by Martin ancestors. It is

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 107

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

the county's most-intact and true-to-form example of a coastal plain cottage and, like the Scales House, has undergone few interior changes and its basic plan, despite a rear addition, has not been altered. The hall-parlor plan is one-and-a-half stories sheltered by a double-pitch side-gable roof. The gable-end chimneys have been removed, the rear porch has been completely enclosed, and an ell added, but the original form, plan, and woodwork remain intact. The engaged front porch features a porch room accessible only from the porch. The rear porch, although altered, also had a porch room, but it is connected to the rest of the house through the parlor. Both principal first floor rooms retain simple Greek Revival trim including a chair rail above a flushboard wainscot. A small, enclosed winder stair leads to the two upper half-story rooms.

Other important and early examples of one- and one-and-a-half-story, frame hall-parlor houses include the Hugh Challis Stubblefield House (RK 1492), probably built around 1809, and the Sneed Strong House (RK 1303), whose chimney is dated 1812. Both Stubblefield and Strong were successful planters and businessmen and though their houses are relatively small by today's standards, these homes, with two rooms on the first floor and two rooms in the upper half-story, were considerably larger than the one-room dwellings built by most citizens in the early 1800s.

The Otway and Sina Bailey House (RK 1512) is a two-story hall-parlor house, notable as two-story house built at a time when most houses were one- or one-and-a-half stories. Built at the time of their marriage in 1821, Otway and Sina Bailey's side-gable dwelling features a robustly paneled wainscot below plaster walls and doors with eight raised panels. Nine-over-nine and nine-over-six sash windows punctuate the façade while tiny four-over-four sash windows are tucked beside the brick gable-end chimneys, which have unusual asymmetrical stepped shouldering. Weatherboards cover the exterior except for the full-width porch wall which is flush-sheathed. Sina Bailey was the daughter of William Bethell, one of the wealthiest men in early Rockingham County, and by 1830 she and Otway owned twenty-three slaves.

Another finely finished two-story hall-parlor plan dwelling is the circa 1840 John Lindsay House (RK 1201), a heavy timber frame dwelling covered in weatherboards on the south side of the Dan River outside of Madison. The house displays transitional Federal and Greek Revival woodwork and enclosed corner stair. John and Lucinda Settle Ellington, wealthy slave owners like Lindsay and the Baileys, also built a two-story hall-parlor house (RK 1313) just west of Wentworth in the early 1830s.

It was not until the 1850s that the center-hall became the standard house plan, but a few well-heeled planters did build frame center-hall houses in the first half of the nineteenth century. At Cascade Plantation (RK 1, NR 1975) on the Dan River in the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 108

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

northeast, Edward Brodnax built a side-passage house around 1811. About 1820, his son, Robert, enlarged the older house and created a double-pile center-hall dwelling. While the older rooms retain restrained Federal detailing, Robert's addition makes the house the Federal masterpiece outside the county's larger towns. Classical motifs like Ionic pilasters and colonettes, acanthus leaf motifs, and classical urns are applied to door surrounds and mantels. Gouging, reeding, garlands, round and oval sunbursts, rosettes and dentils trim cornices, door and window surrounds, chair rails, and mantelpieces.

The Federal-period Fewell-Reynolds House (RK 2, NR 1979), circa 1821, located south of Madison, displays delicate reeding, sunbursts in cornerblocks and on mantelpieces, fanlights, and elaborately grained wainscoting. The center-hall house has extremely vertical proportions enhanced on the interior by a light, open stair ascending three stories into the attic. The house ranks among the most notable Federal houses of the northern Piedmont and the National Register Nomination for the house declares its interior finishes to be of statewide significance. Despite the fashionable treatment, the house retained a traditionally asymmetrical main façade with two front doors.

By the 1830s and 1840s, the center-hall plan began to trickle down from the extremely wealthy, like the Brodnax family, to the fairly well-to-do, such as George and Minerva Boyd. The Boyd House (RK 1016) is an early example of a center-hall dwelling and one of the earliest examples of pure Greek Revival architecture found beyond the city limits of Madison, Eden, and Reidsville. Boyd was a successful planter, mill owner, and merchant who built the house probably in the late 1830s or early 1840s. The two-story building features a grand dogleg stair and a plaster ceiling medallion set in a recessed rectangular panel in the center hall. Within the surviving housing stock, plaster ceiling medallions were not seen elsewhere before the Civil War. Full-blown Greek Revival woodwork, including two-panel doors, massive door and window surrounds, sturdy post-and-lintel mantelpieces, and tall baseboards, fill the interior and carry on into the upper rooms. Most of the first floor woodwork was elaborately and colorfully grained to look like various types of wood, marble, and stone. Around 1859, Boyd removed the original full-height, one-bay portico and replaced it with a one-bay one-story porch featuring a cast iron frieze and iron posts. While stylistically ahead of its time within the county, the Boyds still acknowledged the old open house plan: despite the central hall, fashionable woodwork, and ironwork, three of the four first floor rooms have doors leading directly to the exterior.

Around 1847, Leander Dalton built Green Valley (RK 1144) on the banks of Beaver Island Creek. This two-story center-hall house also has a grand dogleg stair in the hall and Greek Revival woodwork throughout. By the 1850s, the plan had become

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 109

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

popular among more middling farmers. Numerous farmers, such as James Alec Jones (RK 1459), the Huffines family (RK 1460), John Nelson and Emily M. Irvin (RK 1429), and the Willis family (RK 1306) built frame I-houses in the 1850s and early 1860s. Almost invariably, these dwellings have exterior end chimneys and a fairly low-pitch hip roof. Some lack rear rooms or rear shed or ell additions. Others, like the Irvin House and Willis House, feature original two-story rear ells. All have restrained Greek Revival woodwork.

Brick Houses

Brick construction outside the county's largest towns was rare prior to the Civil War and surviving examples are even rarer now that the Spencer House (RK 1188) is a ruin and the Galloways' plantation house has been destroyed. Rose Bank (RK 1229) and the Captain William Dalton House (RK 1185) are two excellent examples. Built in 1848, the two-story, L-shaped Dalton House has a center hall and retains realistic graining from 1877 on the two upstairs mantelpieces. Exterior brick chimneys stand on all three gable ends. Handprints and fingerprints visible on several bricks are reminders of the labor-intensive nature of antebellum masonry construction. To the rear are several log and frame late nineteenth-century, early twentieth-, and late twentieth-century outbuildings including storage sheds, barns, and a tobacco packhouse. Rose Bank (RK 1229), built around 1860 for planter Thomas Price, features an unusual side-passage plan and stands a full two stories above a full basement. The Greek Revival-Italianate brick house is assembled with Flemish bond on the front wall and common bond on the side and rear elevations. On the rear is a brick inscribed while still wet with the letters SJTJ, with the S written backwards.

One of the finest houses in the county is a brick building in the southeast. High Rock (RK 3, NR 1974), named for the nearby High Rock Ford on the Haw River, was probably built in the mid-1830s by the McCain family. The imposing two-story house stands above the county's only rural example of a raised basement. Together with the slight rise on which the dwelling stands and a towering portico finished with substantial brick columns and a lunette window in the gable, the basement is essential in creating an imposing and almost intimidating edifice which actually disguises the fact that, while grand, the house is simply one room deep with an original two-story rear ell behind the north room. The resulting L-shaped house features commodious rooms on either side of the center hall. Federal and Greek Revival woodwork and fine plaster finish the interior. Palladian windows punctuate the front and rear elevations.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 110

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

National Register and Study List Properties

Otway and Sina Bailey House, Ruffin vicinity (RK 1512, SL)
George and Minerva Boyd House, Reidsville vicinity (RK 1016, SL)
Cascade, Eden vicinity (RK 1, NR 1975)
Crowder House, Eden vicinity (RK 1594, SL)
Leander Dalton House, Ayersville vicinity (Green Valley) (RK 1144, SL)
Captain William Dalton House, Stoneville vicinity (RK 1185, SL)
Dodd House, Stoneville (RK 1203, SL)
Dodd-Sheffield House, Oregon Hill vicinity (RK 1417, SL)
Fewell-Reynolds, Madison vicinity (RK 2, NR 1979)
High Rock, Reidsville vicinity (RK 3, NR 1974)
Powell-Watlington House, Reidsville (RK 1448, SL)
Roberts House, Eden vicinity (RK 1295, SL)*
Thomas Price House (Rosebank), Ellisboro vicinity (RK 1229, SL)
Hugh Challis and Frances Stubblefield House, Ruffin vicinity (RK 1492, SL)
Willis-Tuttle House, Eden vicinity (RK 1306, SL)
Winchester House, Reidsville vicinity (RK 1337, SL)

B. Houses Built after the Civil War

In terms of material, houses after the Civil War differed little from their earlier counterparts. Builders continued to construct houses of log, frame, and brick, although the typical financial standing of the owner of each changed. By the end of the Civil War, log was reserved almost exclusively for outbuilding construction and for use by poorer farmers; by the twentieth century, it was used by only the poorest farmers or to build Rustic Revival style dwellings, regardless of economic standing. With the exception of Rustic Revival dwellings, the interior finishes of log houses were not as fine or as well executed as they were before the war. Log houses in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were, like their predecessors, usually one- or one-and-a-half-stories in height although after the Civil War, the half-story tends to be a little taller with room for small windows under the eaves. In addition, the dogtrot and other forms with two pens became more popular after the Civil War.

Frame became the standard construction method for most rural homes, and heavy timber frame construction ceased thanks to improved milling techniques and the availability of dressed lumber. In place of heavy framing, light frame building used

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 111

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

standard studs, sills, and top plates. Balloon framing, in which studs extend the full height of the house, without a plate between the first and second stories, probably gained popularity, but because it cannot be detected without removing interior or exterior sheathing materials, it is impossible to determine how widespread its use was. Boxed-frame construction was also used in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially during the 1930s when an inexpensive building method was preferable. Boxed framing describes a building constructed without regularly spaced studs; instead, vertical framing members are only at the corners, with possibly one or two located along the side walls. A top plate, a sill, and usually a horizontal member placed about mid-way up connected the vertical pieces of lumber that served as both primary structural elements and the enclosing walls. Most often, these vertical elements were board-and-batten siding but occasionally were plain planks covered on the exterior with weatherboards that helped stabilize the flimsy structure. Today, few boxed houses survive, owing to the instability of the method.

Brick, by the mid-twentieth century, became much more accessible and therefore was more commonly applied to middle-class homes than in previous periods. Rock veneer proved a popular exterior material during the twentieth century, especially on Craftsman style bungalows and their outbuildings. Round river rock was particularly favored and was usually dressed with beaded mortar joints.

As a greater variety of building materials became available to more people, building footprints became more elaborate. The single-pile I-house remained a favorite form through the 1920s but double-pile, two-story Craftsman-influenced houses as well as foursquares and one- and two-story T-shaped and L-shaped transitional Queen Anne and Colonial Revival dwellings slowly made their way into the countryside. Later, Craftsman bungalows with irregular plans and no hallways gained popularity.

While the normal influx of trends and the subsequent acceptance or rejection of them combined with fluctuations in the economy to exert force on Rockingham County's rural architecture, two construction projects made a substantial impact on the county's early twentieth-century architecture, as evidenced by the number of Rustic Revival buildings that dot the county today. In the early 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corps built Hanging Rock State Park in neighboring Stokes County. The design included rustic stone and log picnic shelters, stone retaining walls, and most notably, a stone bathhouse. Travel to the park was not easy in the 1930s, but builders and homeowners in western Rockingham County, in relatively close proximity to the site, had fairly easy access and may have been particularly influenced by the park's architecture.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 112

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Several years earlier, however, a more influential group of buildings began to take shape on an estate between Wentworth and Reidsville. Jeff and Betsy Penn started constructing a mansion to be the centerpiece of their extensive farm complex in the 1920s (RK 884, NR 1993). Chinqua-Penn, as it was called, was an important model farm but the design and style of the house, gardens, and even the dependencies significantly influenced smaller-scale architecture across the county. The rambling site comprises the main house, rustic lodges for servants, formal and informal gardens, gatehouses, a swimming pool with a Chinese pagoda, a greenhouse, and an Italian-influenced bell tower. New York architect Harry Ingels designed the twenty-seven-room, log and stone, hunting-lodge-style mansion at the heart of the complex. Exotic period rooms represent Spanish, Italian, Renaissance, English Jacobean, Pompeian, Chinese, and Classical Revival styles in which the Penns displayed the art and art objects collected on frequent trips abroad.²⁶⁷

Although Penn employed Ingels and landscape architect William E. Davies of Buffalo, Chinqua-Penn is the realization of Jeff and Betsy Penn's personal vision. It is the only architect-designed private residence in the county, outside Reidsville, Eden, and Madison, and it is the best and most intact example of formal landscape design in the county.²⁶⁸ It is also one of the few early twentieth-century country estates in North Carolina and one of the most personal architectural statements created by members of the state's wealthy elite.²⁶⁹

Log Houses

Hundreds, possibly thousands, of log buildings were constructed in Rockingham County after the Civil War. Fifty-three post-1861 log buildings and thirty-six post-1861 log buildings with frame additions were documented, but an untold number were mapcoded as part of the survey project. As log construction became more closely identified with poorer citizens, log houses declined in size and quality of construction. By the late nineteenth century, log houses were almost always constructed following a one-room plan. Often a second pen was built beside the first, as an addition, or sometimes both pens were built at once. A unifying roof over the pens and the space between created a dogtrot plan. In another two-pen form, pens were placed close together, either perpendicular to one another or at right angles with their corners nearly touching. While

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ The gardens installed at Mulberry Island by Jeff's brother and his wife during the 1930s may have been architect-designed, but to date, the presence of a designer is not known.

²⁶⁹ Little, "Chinqua-Penn Plantation," section 8, 1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 113

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

an open hyphen or breezeway connected some of these units, they were more often totally disconnected and never shared a unifying roof, yet, like a dogtrot, the two pens functioned as one dwelling. Frame additions could be easily added to log pens as well, a feature which had always been attractive but that was especially appealing to builders of lesser means. Shed rooms nearly surround some log houses while others were completely swallowed in frame additions that created two-story I-houses from one-room log dwellings. Although builders continued to hewn logs fairly carefully into the twentieth century, they did stop using difficult notching. Full dovetail notching was no longer employed and half-dovetailing became less common. The V-notch, the most popular notch before the Civil War, remained the favored joining method, but the less-stable square notch found its way into the log builder's repertoire.

Based on the surviving examples, dogtrots seem to have gained popularity during the 1870s. They remain standing across the county, but almost all have had their center passages enclosed. In 1875, Thomas Hall built a dogtrot on Case School Road, west of Madison (RK 1149). He assembled his house with V-notched logs, installed decoratively grained, two-panel Greek Revival doors, and apparently located the stair to the second story in the now-enclosed dogtrot. Just south of Madison on U.S. Highway 220 is a late nineteenth-century, one-and-a-half-story dogtrot (RK 1226) clad in plain weatherboard and German siding with an enclosed passageway. A single-shoulder brick chimney stands at each end and six-over-six sash windows pierce the front and rear elevations. A one-story gabled ell is attached to the rear. This ell features weatherboard siding, an enclosed porch, and a brick flue. The house rests on stone piers with concrete block fill. Other dogtrots also stand on the Mayo River (RK 1175), near Baker's Crossroads (RK 1409), and east of Mayodan behind the Joseph Wall House (RK 1182) where a tenant built a dogtrot in 1937 or 1938.

Single-pen log homes persisted throughout the late nineteenth century and into the twentieth. The John Galloway Hand Farm (RK 1216) has an early twentieth-century example. Hand built his single-pen home in 1910 and his son later made a frame addition to the north. Inside, the walls, once covered with whitewash, reveal nicely hewn logs. The ceiling joists, still exposed, are unfinished round logs.

James Hickman built another example of the single-pen, twentieth-century log house in the 1920s, around the time of his marriage (RK 1174). The exterior of his one-and-a-half-story, side-gable house is now coved in rolled asphalt siding, but Mr. Hickman described the construction as plank. Mr. Hickman's house was originally a single-pen dwelling to which he added a second pen on the east elevation. He built a shed dormer in the center of the newly-enlarged roof over both pens. Mr. Hickman also added shed

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 114

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

rooms to the rear and a gabled addition to the west gable end. The east gable end features a wide, single-shoulder, fieldstone chimney. Six-over-six windows pierce the front elevation. The house sits on a stone pier foundation with concrete block fill.

The two-part plan, in which two detached log pens are not aligned in a dogtrot or saddlebag, but in an irregular, usually perpendicular arrangement, also continued into the late nineteenth century and occasionally into the twentieth. The form crossed ethnic boundaries as evidenced by the Kelvin Joyce House (RK 1150), a late nineteenth-century example built by a white family, and the nearby Webster House (RK 1151), an early twentieth-century example built by an African American family. According to neighbor Richard Webster, his grandfather, also named Richard Webster, built the Webster House for his sister in the 1920s or 1930s. The house is composed of two freestanding log pens: one a living space, the other a kitchen. The house features an enclosed corner stair and appears to have had board-and-batten siding, at least on the west elevation. The window on the west elevation has six-over-six sash; the window on the front façade has four-over-four sash. A stone chimney with a brick stack occupies the east gable end. The kitchen has an enclosed corner stair and board-and-batten siding over the logs.

There are exceptions to every rule, however, and not all late nineteenth-century log houses were small dwellings built by poorer farmers. John Franklin Dixon built his well-finished, two-story log house on U.S. Highway 158 east of Reidsville around 1875 (RK 1530). The main block has an I-house plan but the center hall is not a through-passage; rather a stair that spans the width of the hall occupies the space, leaving only a foyer off of which the front door and doors to the two main rooms open. Original mantelpieces exhibit late nineteenth-century Queen Anne and Italianate woodwork.

Another exception is the Stewart House (RK 1190). Around 1900, Mr. Stewart, known as a local inventor, built an unusual home, a two-story, log octagonal house constructed of finely hewn logs, on N.C. Highway 135 between Mayodan and Eden. A brick chimney rises through the peak of the pyramidal roof and a one-story porch with Tuscan columns wraps around the front half of the building. Inside, short, angular walls divide the house into irregularly shaped rooms. Some rooms have as many as seven sides. Plaster covers the walls and beaded board sheathes the ceilings. Fireplaces open into two rooms while stovepipe scars indicate that a wood stove or oil burner served most rooms. At least one other octagon building, Frank Mebane's hunting lodge, known as Leather Hinge, stood in the county. Leather Hinge had been built by the time of a circa 1900 photograph, but it is unclear exactly when it was constructed or when it was destroyed.

Log gained new popularity as a hallmark of the Rustic Revival style. Sometimes the style, in which round logs with overlapping saddle notches emphasize the "rustic"

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 115

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

construction method, worked very well for farmers. In the 1930s, for example, when the Watkinses moved to Rockingham County, they used log, the least expensive method, but they executed it in the fashionable Rustic Revival style. Many houses in this style, however, were built of log for fashion's sake rather than economy, and Jeff and Betsy Penn's Chinqua-Penn farm (RK 884) may have influenced builders in that area. Dr. J. A. Roach of Reidsville constructed a Rustic Revival log house (RK 1352) in 1921 as a hunting lodge south of Reidsville. The one-story, gable-front house is built of round logs with saddle notching. Despite the later application of weatherboard siding, the house is an excellent example of the Rustic Revival style with an unaltered interior featuring exposed log walls and ceiling joists. A few years later, in 1936, Will Smith, a farmer near the Virginia state line, built a considerably smaller one-room Rustic Revival retirement home of round logs with saddle notching and cement chinking (RK 1936).

Frame Houses

Frame construction became more prevalent among all economic levels after the Civil War. Most late nineteenth-century rural frame homes are I-houses or one-story center-hall dwellings with side-gable roofs. Chimneys, nearly always located on the gable ends before the Civil War, began to find new interior locations, sometimes rising along the interior hall walls. More often, however, builders started placing chimneys on the rear elevation or leaving one on the gable end while locating the second on the rear elevation. In the 1870s and 1880s, restrained, vernacular Greek Revival elements continued to be applied but by the 1890s, Italianate decorations as well as mass-produced sawnwork, moldings, and mantelpieces became increasingly popular. This decorative, Victorian-era sawnwork and woodwork remained popular into the 1910s. By the 1920s, Craftsman motifs such as porch posts on brick or stone piers and multi-light window sash hung above single-light window sash were applied to I-houses, which continued as the dominant type of farmhouse. Frame bungalows, Ranch houses, and other national styles became more common in the county throughout the middle of the twentieth century.

During Reconstruction building resumed relatively quickly in Madison, the three towns that would become Eden, and particularly in Reidsville, which experienced the county's most immediate post-war growth. In the county's rural areas, however, few houses, except those started before the war, were built until the later 1870s. Among those few, however, were the Wright-Chandler Farm (RK 1563) and Beechwood (RK 1540), both of which were built around 1870 in the Ruffin vicinity. The Wright-Chandler Farm is significant as a farmstead, but the main house is notable in its own right as an intact example of a Reconstruction-era dwelling. The I-house retains all its transitional Greek

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 116

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Revival-Italianate interior fabric, including grained and marbled mantelpieces, baseboards, and doors. Beechwood is also an I-house with Italianate and Greek Revival woodwork including recessed arched alcoves flanking a sophisticated mantelpiece with undulating pilasters and crosspiece below the mantelshelf. The dogleg stair in the hallway features turned balusters and vertical panels below the stringer. Each room has tall Greek Revival baseboards, heavy moldings and cornerblocks at the windows and doors. A simpler 1870s I-house is the Hopper House (RK 1368) near Eden. The plain frame house features two-over-two sash windows and a hip roof front porch with turned posts and spindlework brackets.

Although Greek Revival traditions remained popular into the late nineteenth century, some later post-Civil War houses began exhibiting Queen Anne decorative elements. In particular, builders began adding a gable to the center of the front roof slope, creating a roofline known as a triple-A. The Saunders House (RK 1327), constructed in the Wentworth vicinity probably in the 1880s, features this central gable, which is decorated with shingles and a round attic vent with the letter S applied to it. The Saunders House also has elaborately corbelled brick stacks on its stone gable-end chimneys. In 1888, the Van Hook family built their triple-A I-house in the Benija community near the Guilford County line (RK 1476). Its front gable is adorned with delicate spindlework and sawnwork while corbelled chimneys rise through the interior, along the walls of the central hall.

The C. P. and Ruby Robertson House (RK 1205) in Stoneville and the Wariner House (RK 1525) south of Ruffin are two stylish late nineteenth-century houses, both dating from the 1890s. The two-story, asymmetrically-massed, Queen Anne style Robertson House features a nearly pyramidal roof with gabled projections on three elevations, each embellished with sawnwork and delicate spindlework trim. Tuscan columns support the wrap-around porch, which also bows out slightly on the west elevation. Also highly decorated, but less sophisticated in its style than the Robertson House, the Wariner House displays elaborate and plentiful sawnwork and spindlework on its simple I-house form. Decorative shingles cover the gable ends, and sawnwork brackets and turned posts enrich the full-width front porch.

Two small cottages illustrate typical late nineteenth-century treatments in the one-story form. In southern Rockingham County the Garrison House (RK 1219) is a well-preserved 1890s cottage. Twin gables punctuate the front of the side-gable roof and each gable end is covered with decorative shingles. Weatherboards cover the exterior and a small porch with turned posts and sawnwork brackets shelters the front elevation. Just north of Reidsville, a more elaborate Italianate example (RK 1424) faces Business U.S.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 117

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Highway 29. Like the Garrison House, this late nineteenth-century dwelling has two gables on the front roof slope, but vigorous bracketing in the deep eaves and substantial turned posts produce a more high-style cottage.

The John Matthew and Emma Amos Burton House (RK 1423) illustrates the more common, simple I-house typical of the dwellings farmers constructed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Burtons built their house in 1895 as an addition to the front of a single-pen log house. The new frame I-house is clad in weatherboards, has fieldstone gable-end chimneys, and an interior finished with mass-produced woodwork typical of the period. The Burton House porch has been heavily altered, but originally it was nearly full-width with turned posts and sawnwork brackets.

Many I-houses in Rockingham County began as single-pen log houses. While the Burtons made their older log home an ell on the new I-house, many chose to build around the log house, so that the log pen remained as one of the first-floor rooms of the enlarged dwelling. Examples include the Whitt-Garrison House (RK 1332) near the community of Bethany, a house in the Eden vicinity (RK 1311), and the Baker House (RK 1362) in the Sandy Cross area. Telltale signs of this treatment are a second front door, thick walls in one room, and a chimney constructed of fieldstone to about two-thirds of the way up and finished with brick. The chimney on the opposite side of the house is usually entirely brick unless the original house had been a dogtrot, in which case both end chimneys usually are partially fieldstone extended with brick. Seemingly hundreds of these I-houses built around one or two log rooms stand throughout the county.

Concentrations of small frame houses are found near Rockingham County's mills and factories. Blocks and blocks of mill housing, probably around five hundred houses, line Mayodan's streets. When Henry Fries and his investors constructed Mayo Mills here in the late 1800s, they also acquired many of the town's building lots and constructed most of the town's houses. The diminutive one-story homes, most of which have L-shaped footprints with a side-gable wing and a front gable wing projecting towards the street, all have rear lots that could accommodate a vegetable garden and chickens. Most houses are nearly identical and their consistent setback from the street creates the uniform streetscape typical of mill villages from this period. Houses have small porches and a front-facing gable may be either on the right or left side of the façade of the longer wing, or the house might be oriented with the short side parallel to the street and the long wing as the gable-front wing. Washington Mills, as Mayo Mills was later called, began selling the company-owned homes to individuals in 1955. Based on a 1904 photograph of the town, evidently taken from the roof of the mill, it appears that most of the town's houses had already been built.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 118

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

During the 1910s and 1920s, the Craftsman style, emphasizing the use of natural materials and design elements such as exposed raftertails, kneebraces, and exposed false beams meant to highlight craftsmanship in construction, became popular across the country. The style was most commonly applied to bungalows, one-story cottages with casual, asymmetrical facades and floor plans. Craftsman style bungalows began to be built in Rockingham County's larger towns at the same time the style took hold across North Carolina, but in the county's countryside, only references to the style were applied to older forms, namely I-houses. It was not until the later 1920s and 1930s that Craftsman bungalows began to dot the countryside, but once the mode gained acceptance, hundreds and hundreds of bungalows were rapidly constructed, and the style and form remained popular in rural areas until the early 1940s, long after it had fallen out of favor in urban areas.

Bungalows are distributed evenly across the county and were built in standard, nationally popular forms with frame, brick veneer, or stone veneer exteriors. John and Bessie Wall built a frame, gable-front Craftsman style bungalow on their farm (RK 1325) in 1927. The house is clad in narrow weatherboards and has a wrap-around porch that terminates at a porte-cochere on the south end. The house's gable ends display circular attics vent with stylized plant motifs, a vent covering seen on several early twentieth-century houses in the area. Several years later, in 1941, Ernest and Thelma Mabe and their contractor, John Smith and Sons, rushed to finish their Craftsman style bungalow (RK 1272) before war-time rationing took effect. The one-story bungalow with a cross-gable wrap-around porch features wide battered posts on brick piers. Decorative false beams accent the gable ends, while inside, the pine walls, ceilings, and floors create cozy living spaces. In 1946, Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Forbes built a frame bungalow next to Mr. Forbes' parents' house (RK 1246) near the community of Intelligence. The one-story dwelling has four-over-one sash windows, an engaged full-width front porch, and a side-gable roof with a gable-front dormer.

Brick Houses

The use of brick immediately after the Civil War was no different from pre-war use: only fairly wealthy people could afford to build them and thus, very few were built. Slowly, however, this changed as mass production of brick, like the mass production of wood construction materials, and the rise of brick veneering techniques made the product more affordable. Brick veneer is created by laying brick in a single width attached to a wooden frame. Previously, brick walls required a width of at least two bricks for stability, but veneering eliminated the expense by halving the number of bricks needed and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 119

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

allowing for faster construction. Still, it was not used commonly until after World War II.

Two late nineteenth-century brick cottages stand in Stoneville. Distinctive for the simple fact they are brick, they are also notable as the only documented load-bearing (not brick veneer) one-story brick houses outside the county's largest towns. The Thomas House (RK 1206), built around 1890, is a one-story triple-A cottage with seven-to-one common bond pattern and two-over-two sash windows set in segmental arch openings. Across town from the Thomas House is another house (RK 1210) probably constructed around 1900. This gable-ell cottage features Flemish bond brickwork on the facade and common bonding on the side elevation. The house retains turned porch posts and a pressed-metal shingle roof.

The C. Walter Case House, which was probably constructed around 1919, is a brick hall-parlor dwelling. Although the plan has been altered and various changes made, the Case House is the only twentieth-century load-bearing brick dwelling documented in the survey and it is the latest recorded example of the hall-parlor plan. Mr. Case, from Stuart, Virginia, traveled to the site to work on the house over the course of a few years. He made all of the bricks using clay from the creek bottom located directly west of the house. The resulting dwelling is a two-story, brick building laid in a five-to-one common bond. On both gable ends are single-shouldered chimneys with stepped bases.

Brick veneer was applied to Craftsman-style bungalows and other styles throughout the twentieth century. In the Oregon Hill community, farmer and local builder Buck Ellington built a brick veneer bungalow (RK 1572) for his family in 1939. The one-and-a-half-story, gable-roofed dwelling has a small projecting gable-front bay, a gabled dormer on the front roof slope, and a wrap-around porch with columns on brick piers. Ellington's house is typical of the brick bungalows constructed all across Rockingham County in the 1930s and 1940s and is similar to the brick veneer bungalow (RK 1418) he built for a neighbor as well as a brick veneer bungalow (RK 1498) built for Ira and Mattie Powell in 1932 from a *Better Homes and Gardens* pattern.

A good example of a late brick veneer Period Cottage, or English Cottage, is the Smith House (RK 1192), constructed in 1957. The side-gable house features a small front gable at the entrance bay and a larger, central front gable with a picture window and an arched attic vent. Typical of the style are the round-arch front door and the brick chimney on the front elevation. A side porch with arched openings is attached to the north gable end, and a gabled ell is attached to the south gable end. Boxwoods line the front walkway. The late date of the Smith House illustrates the fact that rural Rockingham County residents continued to build in older styles well into the twentieth century.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 120

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Hundreds of Period Cottages built in the 1940s and 1950s dot Rockingham County's rural landscape. The style was not as popular as the Craftsman bungalow, but does occur with great frequency across the county.

An example of a brick veneer Minimal Traditional dwelling is the house Tom Fuquay and his wife built in 1948 (RK 1255). Minimal Traditional houses are one-story, side-gable dwellings usually with a gable-front pavilion or projection. They take their name from the minimal or restrained Colonial Revival or Tudor Revival ornament sparsely applied to their facades. The Fuquay House exhibits all the traits of a Minimal Traditional house: the one-story, brick veneer dwelling is dominated by a projecting front gable with a chimney on the façade and metal casement windows punctuating the elevations. Like the Period Cottage and Craftsman style bungalow, hundreds of Minimal Traditional houses were built in Rockingham County in the 1940s and 1950s, and probably into the 1960s.

Stone Houses

Stone veneer construction also became popular in the early twentieth century. Fieldstones had always been used for foundations and chimneys, but after 1900, and particularly after the construction of Chinqua-Penn during the 1920s (RK 884, discussed earlier), Rockingham County builders began creating decorative veneers of rounded rocks gathered from local creeks and rivers.

Numerous examples of stone veneered houses are scattered across the county. The Roberts House (RK 1507) is one example of a bungalow clad in round river rock. In the gable end, small stones form an R and the date, 1935. At the Shreve House (RK 1342) the current owner recalls collecting stone from a nearby creek bank and helping his mother with the home's construction in the 1930s. A stone veneer house (RK 1288) near Settle's Bridge over the Dan has a matching stone wellhouse and low retaining wall. At the Paschal Farm (RK 1435) near Monroeton, an unincorporated crossroads community in the southern section of the county, Joe Paschal, a locally famous mason well known for his river rock masonry, helped his brother, Richard, trim his new brick bungalow with stone accents. This property also includes a matching stone wellhouse.

National Register and Study List Properties

Baker House, Bethany vicinity (RK 1362, SL)

Chinqua-Penn Plantation, Reidsville vicinity (RK 884, NR 1993)

Hopper House, Stoneville (RK 1262, SL)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 121

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Lauten Place, Madison vicinity (RK 1180, SL)
Richard Webster House, Madison vicinity (RK 1151, SL)
Roberts House, Eden vicinity (RK 1295, SL)*
Stewart House, Mayodan vicinity (RK 1190, SL)
James Christian Wariner House, Ruffin vicinity (RK 1525, SL)

Significance

Houses are significant as reflections of the architectural trends which take place over time. They exhibit local building traditions as well as adaptations, both unique and standard, of nationally popular styles, which in turn reflect trends in the county's social history and economy. The earliest dwellings provide insight into where and how early settlers and second, third, and fourth generations of Rockingham County residents lived, although this information is generally gleaned from the history of the county's wealthier citizenry whose houses are thought to survive more frequently. More houses built after the Civil War survive and therefore yield a broader and presumably more accurate picture of the economic and social diversity within the county. Prosperity linked to railroads, tobacco, and industry are illustrated by the houses built during the late nineteenth century while the untold numbers of small farms attest both to the rise of the small farmer and to the limited opportunities these farmers and tenant farmers faced.

Registration Requirements

In order for a dwelling in Rockingham County to be eligible for listing in the National Register, it must meet certain registration requirements. Individual houses must retain a high level of integrity in order to be considered eligible under Criterion C for architectural significance. The integrity threshold may be less stringent for dwellings in largely intact farm complexes or in a district where, in either case, it is the group rather than the individual components that is of primary importance. Due to their rarity, houses dating from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, however, can sustain more alterations than more numerous later dwellings and still be considered eligible as long as the design, general plan, and most original materials are largely intact. In rare cases, houses with synthetic siding may be eligible under Criterion B as long as the building's other original characteristics remain intact and the replacement siding has the appearance of the original. In very rare cases a house with synthetic siding may be eligible under Criterion C in the area of architecture if all the other original features remain intact and the architectural elements that lend the house its significance are of exceptional

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 122

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

importance. Most houses must occupy their original sites, although in rare cases, buildings of outstanding historical or architectural merit that have been moved may remain eligible if the architectural integrity is maintained and the new site, as well as the building's placement on it, is similar to the original.

In addition, several houses in Rockingham County illustrate the progression of stylistic influences and developing building techniques through additions or remodeling over time. Alterations made at least fifty years ago may contribute to the building's significance when they retain integrity of design, materials, and workmanship.

Property Type 3: Institutional

Introduction

Churches, schools, and governmental buildings have played an important role in the everyday life of Rockingham County's inhabitants. Before the widespread use of automobiles, these were vital places of cultural and social contact and remain so today, despite cars, telephones, the internet, and televisions. Both churches and schools usually started in log buildings until the local population was able to construct a frame sanctuary or classroom. Some groups later built brick buildings. Rockingham County's governmental buildings, if not originally constructed from brick, were frame buildings that were later replaced with masonry buildings. Frame churches are generally gable-front structures with Greek Revival and later Queen Anne or Gothic Revival decorative elements. Historic school buildings range in size and style from one-room, gable-front buildings with restrained Queen Anne decorations to large, classically-inspired brick buildings. The extant historic government buildings are generally architect-designed, classically-inspired brick and stone monuments.

Description

A. Churches and Cemeteries

Rural Rockingham County churches are invariably rectangular buildings with simple, gable roofs. The main entrance is usually in a gable end, although Primitive Baptist Churches often have additional doors on their side elevations. Gable-front churches usually have a single aisle or two aisles dividing pews into three groups facing a pulpit at the back of the building, opposite the front entrance. Those with extra side entrances, however, frequently have a meetinghouse plan with the pulpit on either a long or short wall with pews facing it on three sides. Stylistic differences between mid-

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 123

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

nineteenth-century churches and those built one hundred years later generally are minimal. Churches constructed in towns might display more fashion consciousness, but they, too, are usually gable-front rectangles. Towers are rare and are only seen in Mayodan and Stoneville. A total of twenty-eight churches, six of which pre-date the Civil War, were documented as part of the survey.

Matrimony Primitive Baptist Church (RK 996) was organized by 1777 and a 1789 deed refers to a church building on this property. The actual date of the existing building's construction is uncertain but it may be the county's earliest church building. The sanctuary of this small building appears to be log, although it may have undergone a frame expansion. The church stands on a fieldstone, brick, and concrete block foundation. A twentieth-century gable-front addition centered on the gable-front elevation created space for restrooms and a vestibule. Vinyl siding covers the exterior and gypsum board covers the interior, effectively obscuring decorative details that might yield clues about the building's age. Inside, delicate chamfered and tapered posts punctuate the meetinghouse plan. While Primitive Baptist Churches from all periods have side doors, suggesting that they all originally followed a meetinghouse arrangement with the pulpit against a long wall, Matrimony is the only documented example of a congregation continuing to use that plan; other congregations now place the pulpit on a short wall, but continue to arrange pews on three sides of the pulpit.

In the 1850s, a church building boom swept Rockingham County. Prospering residents lent financial support for the replacement of early log buildings with new frame, Greek Revival edifices. Wentworth Methodist Church (RK 28, NR 1986) is one of the least altered and most highly finished examples of this trend. Built in 1859, the gable-front building features a remarkably intact Greek Revival exterior and interior. Wentworth's Presbyterians also built a Greek Revival sanctuary (RK 657), as did congregants at Lick Fork Primitive Baptist (RK 1509), Salem Methodist (RK 1385), Wolf Island Primitive Baptist (RK 1393), and Speedwell Presbyterian (RK 991).

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, towns swelled with new residents and new churches were built. Unlike congregations in the countryside, town churches left the simple rectangular plan behind and executed their more stylish sanctuaries with L-shaped footprints, often incorporating towers. If the simple rectangular form was maintained, however, it was considerably more decorated than contemporary rural churches. The Mayodan Moravian Church (RK 1469) and the Episcopal Church of the Messiah (RK 1468) were erected in 1896 and 1906 respectively. The Moravians built a frame cross-gable church with a corner tower. The Episcopalians chose a gable-front carpenter Gothic Revival design which stands on Second Avenue on the edge of downtown Mayodan. In

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 124

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Stoneville, the members of the Christian Church decorated their 1891 cross-gable sanctuary (RK 1263) with peaked windows, shingles, and a bell tower with a pyramidal roof. Stoneville's Presbyterians also built a frame, gable-front church (RK 1204) with a full-height portico in 1905.

Rural churches, such as the 1911 Macedonia Primitive Baptist Church (RK 1388) located just north of Wentworth, continued using the gable-front rectangular design with little ornamentation. Glenn's Chapel Church (RK 1134) in the rural northwest corner of the county is a slightly larger and more stylish brick-veneer variation of the same form. Built in 1939 and 1940 to replace an earlier building, the historically non-denominational church features a Gothic Revival batten door with iron strap-hinges and Gothic arched windows on the side elevations.

A new wave of church rebuilding occurred in the wake of economic prosperity following World War II. Again, the gable-front rectangular plan was favored, but in the second half of the twentieth century it was usually executed in brick veneer. Wolf Island Primitive Baptist Church replaced their mid-nineteenth-century building with a brick-veneer version in 1946. The simple building, probably differing very little in form from the church's two previous sanctuaries, has a gable-front roof, metal casement windows, and a door on the side elevation in addition to the main front entrance. The side door may be a reference to the traditional meetinghouse plan (the interior was inaccessible), but a small apse opposite the front entrance indicates the location of the pulpit, which suggests an aisled interior configuration or a meetinghouse plan, but with the pulpit on the short wall.

African American congregations formed during Reconstruction and built sanctuaries in rural sections of the county, but most often African Americans organized churches in the county's larger towns. While a few rural congregations organized historically, all their historic buildings have been replaced with modern buildings, a loss to the architectural record but also a testament to the continued success and growth of rural African American churches in the county.

Most churches have an associated cemetery in close proximity to the sanctuary and many farms and houses scattered across the county incorporate small family burying grounds. Untold numbers of cemeteries have been lost as adjacent houses or churches were demolished or abandoned and later development or natural vegetative overgrowth occurred. Cemeteries in Rockingham County followed traditional patterns seen across North Carolina: Church cemeteries are located on the church property, often surrounding the sanctuary on two or three sides or, occasionally, sited across a road or railroad track from the building. Usually, no fencing surrounds the site, although fences or low walls

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 125

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

often encircle family plots within the larger site. Family cemeteries not associated with a church are common in rural Rockingham County and were usually sited near one or more dwellings that the family built. All of the cemeteries recorded with churches are active and continue to accept burials. Most of the documented family cemeteries, however, are abandoned or neglected, although numerous plots not recorded due to the younger age of most of the marked graves or the absence of unusual or significant funerary art appear to still be used for interment.

The most common nineteenth-century gravemarker, based on the documented examples, is the standing un-carved fieldstone. Many cemeteries initially appear to have only a few burials, but careful observation reveals many (sometimes two or three, sometimes dozens, sometimes hundreds) of low fieldstones projecting from the earth. Of the more elaborate markers, flat soapstone tablets with round heads and delicately incised inscriptions were favored during the first four or five decades of the nineteenth century. By the 1840s and throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century, flat standing tablets, usually of marble or granite and sometimes with an arched top edge, were typical. Favored during the Victorian-era were raised rectangular vaults topped with large, flat marble tablets. After the Civil War and into the early twentieth century, highly decorative marble and cast concrete markers and monuments depicting urns, angels, columns, or tree trunks become common sights in the county's cemeteries, although their numbers are much lower than unmarked fieldstones and simple standing tablets. The use of vernacular markers of concrete with designs executed in pebbles, marbles, or shells also gained popularity in the early twentieth century, and while this continues to some degree today, the standard granite headstones that came into widespread use by the 1940s are now the most common marker in the county.

Two old and extensive church-associated cemeteries are at Speedwell Presbyterian Church (RK 991) and Wentworth Methodist Church (RK 28). One stone at Speedwell, with a date that appears to read 1739, is the county's oldest grave marker. According to a commemorative plaque placed in the cemetery by the Daughters of the American Revolution, both British and American casualties were buried here after the Battle of Guilford Courthouse in 1781. Other eighteenth-century markers are standing fieldstones usually carved with names or initials and sometimes death and birth dates. Early nineteenth-century stones are tablets with round heads and sloped or square shoulders while late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century markers feature typical motifs such as crowned crosses, hands pointed to or from heaven, and drapery. Stone walls, iron fences, and stone or brick borders delineate small family groups.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 126

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

At Wentworth Methodist Church, mid- and late nineteenth-century markers display the standard variety of fieldstones mixed with marble tablets and three obelisks (a form not often seen in rural cemeteries in Rockingham County) commemorating three Boyd brothers who died during the Civil War. Behind the church and primary cemetery, the grade drops to the south. This hillside is covered with hundreds of African American graves. Most markers are fieldstones, some with carved names or initials, while a few are more intricately carved soapstones. Cemeteries at Sardis Primitive Baptist Church (RK 1238), Lick Fork Primitive Baptist Church (RK 1509), and Fairgrove United Methodist Church (RK 1442) all exhibit a wide range of markers, from fieldstones to raised marble tombs to elaborate concrete tree trunks.

In addition to church-associated cemeteries, family cemeteries are scattered about the county. The most unusual is the York-Perdue Cemetery (RK 1167) in the southwest corner of the county. Low fieldstone walls (ten to twelve inches high) outline the length and width of at least nineteen graves in the northeast corner of the cemetery. The spaces inside the walls have been filled with dirt and fieldstones and some graves have standing fieldstones at the head and foot of the grave. The barely-legible inscription on one of the standing stones suggests these burials occurred in the mid-1800s.

More traditional markers stand at the early nineteenth-century King Family Cemetery (RK 1008), the Guerrant Cemetery (RK 1499), and at the Settle Family Cemetery (RK 1531) just east of Reidsville. The King burying ground includes thirty to fifty marked and unmarked graves. Although neglected and overgrown with periwinkle and large boxwoods that are about to swallow the site, the cemetery features expertly carved soapstone markers with scrolled tops. Stones date from the 1810s and 1820s through the rest of the nineteenth century. The Guerrant Cemetery includes a similar collection of early nineteenth-century markers as well as many (possibly fifty or sixty) unmarked graves.

The Settle Cemetery is important as the final resting place for several members of one of Rockingham County's most important political families and as the location of the county's only known antebellum carved marker commemorating an African American. The site appears to contain many unmarked graves, perhaps as many as one hundred, but only twelve graves mark the burials of Martins and Settles. Those interred here include Thomas Settle Sr.—a state legislative representative from Rockingham County in the 1810s, a United States congressman in the late 1810s and 1820s, and a Superior Court Judge in the 1830s—and Martha Martin Douglas, a Settle relative and wife of Stephen A. Douglas. The grave marker for an African American reads, "To the memory of Washington, a good servant of J. Settle who accidentally shot himself Christmas day

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 127

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

1846 in the 16th year of his age.” Washington was, in fact, the son of Josiah Settle (brother of Thomas Sr.), who fathered several children with his slave, Nancy, before freeing her and their children and settling them in Ohio.

National Register and Study List Properties

Christian View Camp Meeting, Eden vicinity (RK 1138, SL)
Episcopal Church of the Messiah, Mayodan (RK 1468, SL as part of Mayodan district)
Lick Fork Primitive Baptist Church, Ruffin vicinity (RK 1509, SL)
Settle Family Cemetery, Reidsville vicinity (RK 1531, SL)
Speedwell Presbyterian Church Cemetery, Reidsville vicinity (RK 991, SL)
Wentworth Methodist Church and Cemetery, Wentworth (RK 28, NR)

B. Schools

No extant school buildings constructed in Rockingham County before the Civil War have been identified. Even the precise location of the building in the Williamsburg community that was the first public school in the state has been lost. Records indicate that most of the very early schools were log buildings, with the exception of some of the private academies located in towns, which were usually frame or brick. Three log schools remain: Grassy Springs, which was moved to the Rockingham Community College campus (RK 1581), the heavily restored Bason School (RK 1582), and Mountain Oak behind a residence in the Baker’s Crossroads area. Most of the earliest remaining school buildings, twelve in all, date from the first few decades of the twentieth century when small one- and two-room schools dotted the countryside.

Of the several schools still standing from this period, Joyce School (RK 1161) is one of the most intact. Weatherboards cover the exterior and a small square copula caps the gable-front roof. The deteriorated interior retains evidence of plaster walls, beaded board wainscoting, and molded window and door trim finished with bull’s eye corner blocks.

Blue Stone School (RK 1550) is one of rural Rockingham County’s three or four extant frame schools for African American students. The two-room building has a recessed entrance porch with doors into each classroom. Flanking the entrance porch are coat closets for each class. Most of the interior finishes are no longer in place. Six-over-six sash windows with transoms pierced the side elevations but have been replaced with smaller, modern vinyl sash. A hip roof shelters the building.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 128

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Seven consolidated schools were built across the county outside Eden, Madison, and Reidsville in the 1920s and of these, six are still standing and at least two are still in use. Consolidated schools at the communities of Bethany, Williamsburg, and Happy Home followed nearly identical designs. All are one-story, U- or H-shape brick buildings on full foundations. Banks of large six-over-six sash windows illuminate each room. Bethany School (RK 1318), for example, was constructed in 1925 and followed state guidelines calling for brick construction and a plan that included an auditorium and a location on what was at the time a well-traveled road (N.C. Highway 65). The school is a U-shaped building with an auditorium projecting to the rear from the bottom of the U. The hip-roof building features recessed entrances and a classical pediment over the main entrance.

Wentworth Consolidated School (RK 1281), constructed in 1923, is a remarkably intact, two-story brick school building on a raised basement. The hip-roof building features a shaped parapet over the central entrance bay. The only significant change has been the replacement of the original windows. The modern replacements, however, are the same size as the original and retain their paired and banked arrangements. A brick soldier course water table encircles the building above the basement windows while a belt course appears above the first-floor windows. The most decorative feature is the main entrance: a segmental-arched recess trimmed with stone molding and a keystone and surmounted by a molded hood supported by wide consoles and featuring Roman numerals indicating the building's construction date. Above, a recessed sign panel featuring the school's name completes the composition. An original, two-story rear wing with arched windows houses an auditorium.

Study List Properties

Bethany School, Bethany (RK 1318, SL)
Blue Stone School, Eden vicinity (RK 1550, SL)
Happy Home School, Eden vicinity (RK 1490, SL)
Martin School, Ayersville vicinity (RK 1135, SL)
Ruffin School, Ruffin (RK 1562, SL)
Sadler School, Ruffin vicinity (RK 1510, SL)
Wentworth Consolidated School, Wentworth (RK 1281, SL)
Williamsburg School, Williamsburg (RK 1541, SL)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 129

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

C. Government Buildings

Because the survey did not cover the larger towns of Madison, Eden, and Reidsville and because the historic government buildings in Stoneville and Mayodan have been replaced, the only government buildings documented are those located in Wentworth. Rockingham County's courthouse (RK 5, NR 1979), sitting on the edge of N.C. Highway 65, makes an authoritative statement proclaiming itself the seat of government. Built in 1907 to replace the 1880s courthouse, it is a three-story, classically inspired building with a portico supported by brick columns. The building features a low cupola and a heavy cornice. The former Rockingham County Jail (RK 5, NR 1979), built between 1910 and 1911, is a two-story brick building with a square tower and wide frieze and cornice. The jail and courthouse stand on opposite sides of the road from each other, anchoring their sides of the courthouse square.

The County Home (RK 1279), located just east of Wentworth, originally housed poor elderly citizens. Constructed in the 1920s, the gable-roofed, two-story brick building stretches out in a shallow V-shape with shaped parapets on each end and over the center entrance bay. On the first floor of the end of each wing are recessed porches with segmental arch openings, which have now been enclosed. The building still retains six-over-six sash windows set in segmental arch openings on the front elevation. The first floor of the center bay has been remodeled with the addition of a modern brick façade. Tripartite, arched attic windows and vents are located in the tops of the three shaped parapets. The eaves feature scrolled decorative exposed raftertails. To the rear stand two hip-roof sections that are historic additions. An elevator tower addition also occupies the rear elevation. Brick chimneys pierce the rear roof slope.

National Register Properties

Rockingham County Courthouse and Jail (RK 5, NR 1979)

Significance

Institutional buildings are historically significant as centers of community development and as places of community identity. In these buildings, neighbors and fellow citizens gathered to share and either reject or accept the ideas and trends that guided the county's history and ultimately shaped its architecture. Many are also architecturally significant as notable examples of a certain type of architecture or as representative examples of plans and styles popular nationwide. They are important as the places and architecture that illustrate the local history of education, social history, and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 130

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

government and politics. Some cemeteries may also be eligible for their funerary art, their association with the county's very early history and settlement patterns, or for their association with important persons when no other site or building associated with the individual exists.

Registration Requirements

To be eligible for listing in the National Register, an institutional building in Rockingham County must be fifty years old or older. Churches must retain their location, setting, and overall architectural integrity of design and workmanship. If a church is significant for its architecture, alterations should be minimal and the interior should remain intact in order for the building to be eligible. Churches which are significant for their histories or are part of a district may display a lower degree of architectural integrity and still be considered eligible or a contributing member of a district. New siding does not automatically preclude eligibility if it matches the original and other architectural features, including the original siding beneath the replacement sheathing, are intact.

Cemeteries may be eligible as part of a significant church property or individually. The cemetery's layout or plan, markers, or other features, such as fences, must retain their integrity. If the cemetery's significance is derived from the burial of an important person, there should be no other site or building associated with that person's life.

Historic schools in Rockingham County are not as uncommon as they might be in other locations, but examples that have not been altered for continued use as a school, adapted for use as a dwelling, or left to decay are extremely rare. Frame school buildings are particularly rare as their small size and frame construction usually lead to their abandonment before the 1920s or 1930s. Therefore, architectural integrity thresholds are slightly lower than for church buildings, which generally have not been neglected or converted for use as a dwelling. Integrity of original setting, overall form, location, and fenestration should have been maintained. Because of the rarity of intact school buildings, removal or covering of some interior materials and replacement of the windows might be acceptable, but the building's plan should remain mostly intact or entirely intact, especially if the school was only a one- or two-room building. If these requirements are met, schools significant under Criteria A, B, and C should be eligible.

Government buildings outside Madison, Eden, and Reidsville are centered in Wentworth and are some of the county's few architect-designed buildings. Government buildings must retain integrity of exterior design, location, setting, materials, and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 131

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

fenestration. Overall interior design should be intact, although reversible room divisions added to create modern office spaces should not preclude eligibility.

Property Type 4: Commercial Buildings

Description

One- and two-story commercial buildings are numerous in Rockingham County's smaller towns. Of the areas included in this survey, they are most concentrated in the incorporated towns, especially Mayodan and Stoneville. A small number stand in Wentworth and Ruffin, but at smaller crossroads, such as Price, Lawsonville, or Shiloh, there is only one historic commercial building or none at all. Historic commercial buildings also are found scattered across the county along highways such as U. S. Highways 150 and 158 and N.C. Highways 700 and 65. Nineteenth-century examples outside the towns were country stores selling a wide variety of wares. Those built after the 1910s were usually slightly smaller and may or may not have sold a selection of general merchandise; instead, their focus was on gasoline sales and auto repair or auto supplies.

The oldest commercial building in the county is the Wright Tavern (RK 7, NR 1970) located in Wentworth. Dating from before 1814, the Wright Tavern is a two-story, Federal building constructed in three phases, of which two phases remain. Together, the two existing sections create a dogtrot form. The earliest part of the building was demolished to make way for the eastern end (and now the younger section) of the building. The earlier of the two existing two-story sections is the four-bay western portion clad in beaded weatherboards. On the first story, the easternmost bay of the western section is an open dogtrot breezeway reached through a segmental arch opening trimmed with pilasters and a wooden keystone. The stair to the second story is located in this open passage. The three-bay, double-pile addition, which took the place of the original section, defines the east side of the dogtrot and is sheathed in plain weatherboards. This later section is stylistically similar to the earlier portion and probably dates to the 1820s. Flushboard sheathing covers the façade underneath the full-width shed porch. A shed addition and gabled ell are attached to the rear. Single-shoulder brick chimneys stand on both gable ends. Both nine-over-nine and six-over-nine windows pierce the elevations. Two outbuildings stand to the rear: one appears to be a frame kitchen, while the other is log and was probably a smokehouse. The Wright Tavern is

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 132

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

extraordinary as one of the few very early, intact examples of a commercial building in rural North Carolina, outside the state's coastal towns. It is also a remarkably sophisticated example of a dogtrot, a form generally executed in log with little, if any, finely-finished architectural detail. The Wright Tavern was a gathering spot for local and state politicians visiting the county seat and it is one of the few buildings in the state that was used as a tavern for well over a century.

Mayodan, Ruffin, and Stoneville retain a notable number of intact historic commercial buildings. A pair of buildings in Ruffin is particularly important and rare for its age (commercial architecture in rural locations dating to periods earlier than the 1890s is uncommon) and materials (log commercial architecture is nearly non-existent across the state). The Ruffin Hotel and Lucky 13 Saloon (RK 1502) are decaying but unaltered examples of commercial architecture probably from the 1870s, based on materials, style, and Ruffin's historical development. The Ruffin Hotel is a two-story gable-front frame building with paneled square porch posts and paneled wooden shutters. Weatherboards cover the exterior. Next door, the Lucky 13 is the only known log commercial building remaining in the county and one of less than five commercial log buildings known to stand in the state. Also a gable-front building, the Lucky 13 is one-story and partially clad with weatherboards. It too had a full-width front porch.

Stoneville's central business district extends primarily north along one block of North Henry Street from the intersection of Henry and Main streets. A few businesses are located along one block of East Main Street while one historic building remains on West Main. A tornado in March 1998 devastated downtown Stoneville, destroying the depot, historic tobacco warehouses, and several commercial buildings. In addition to outright losses, some historic commercial buildings that survived were so severely damaged that repairs entailed virtual rebuilding. Nevertheless, Stoneville retains three or four buildings that sustained only a small amount of tornado damage, and those that were extensively repaired were done so in a sympathetic manner. Stoneville's commercial buildings are brick and exhibit Italianate and restrained Queen Anne decorative elements, typical of small towns across North Carolina. One of the most intact of the surviving historic buildings is the brick, two-story Stone Building, circa 1900, with two-over-two sash windows in segmental arch openings at the upper level. The first floor is divided into two storefronts, both with recessed entries and large two-over-one display windows. A pent roof with a bracketed cornice extends across the façade above the storefronts.

Mayodan's downtown business district is centered at Main Street and Second Avenue, extending about a block in each direction from that intersection. Like Stoneville, most of the buildings are one- and two-story brick stores. A two-story brick store at the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 133

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

southeast corner of Main Street and Second Avenue features segmental arch windows and a corbelled brick cornice. Its recessed corner entrance addresses the town's main intersection.

Commercial buildings scattered in the countryside today are often the primary indication of both defunct and extant rural communities. For example, a store (RK 1405) sharing a lot with a house helps to identify the Oregon Hill community. Possibly dating to the late nineteenth century, the two-story gable-front building is frame with weatherboard siding, except on the first floor façade where flushboard sheathes the wall, possibly indicating the prior presence of a porch. Windows flank the central double-leaf entrance and a single window lights the upper space. Similarly, Smith's Grocery (RK 1141), a gable-front store with a board-and-batten exterior and a stepped parapet built in 1934, is one of the few commercial landmarks in the Christian View community. In some instances, identification with a specific community is tenuous. The Cummings Store (RK 1339) on U.S. Highway 158 in the southern part of the county, built in 1879, is similar in design to the store at Oregon Hill, but it is removed from any named community. The Baynes Store (RK 1323) is another commercial building without a specific community tie. The one-story gable-front commercial building on N.C. Highway 65 was probably built around 1900.

In addition to the country stores expected in the rural landscape, gas stations are another common roadside sight. Some are more highly designed, like one example situated in a residential area just outside of Wentworth. The 1920s or 1930s station (RK 1387) was probably originally a Standard Oil outlet. The building features reserved Spanish Eclectic detailing, a canopy, an office or sales room, and living quarters at the rear. The canopy features a peaked parapet capped with clay tiles supported by square columns decorated with arched, tiled panels. The canopy shelters a large display window, which has been replaced with modern glass, and an off-center entrance with a transom. A gabled roof shelters the rear living space, which is also stucco-clad. Most gas stations of the first half of the twentieth century, however, were more like a former Gulf gas station (RK 1128) on old U.S. Highway 220 or a gas station on U.S. Highway 158 (RK 1334): simple, frame, gable-front commercial buildings, not unlike stores built in the nineteenth century.

Tourist courts and motor lodges provided accommodation for travelers on the north-south corridors of U.S. Highways 29 and 220 (now Business U.S. 29 and N.C. Highway 704, respectively). Grogan's Tourist Court (RK 1169) is the most intact early motel in the county. Likely begun in the late 1920s and expanded in the 1930s and again in the 1950s, Grogan's was strategically situated immediately east of Madison and the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 134

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Dan River to serve the travelers on the former route of U.S. Highway 220. This property comprises three buildings. The oldest section exhibits a long, stuccoed façade along the highway. With a distinctive design featuring peaks in the parapet, each unit has a door, a window, and a garage with an overhead door, indicating the rising importance and pervasiveness of the automobile. A band of diamond-shaped tiles creates a cornice line across the top of the building. A second building, possibly from the 1950s, is part of the complex. It is located to the west of the original section, across SR 1145, and follows the curving path of that road to the south. This building features a lower level of units and does not have garages. Directly across the highway from the motel is a two-story commercial building, also part of the complex, which likely housed a restaurant and store. Built in two phases during the 1920s and 1930s, this building repeats the stucco exterior and tile trim found on the motel.

A 1940s or early 1950s motel (RK 1511) stands on the west side of U.S. Highway 29 Business (the original U.S. Highway 29), just south of Ruffin. The 1940s complex is composed of an office and guest quarters arranged in a line parallel to the highway. The three southernmost buildings are identical one-story side-gable concrete block buildings, each with two central doors leading into two guest units. Each unit has a metal casement window on the façade and one in the gable end. North of these is a one-story concrete block commercial building housing the motel office and a service station complete with a garage bay.

National Register and Study List Properties

Commercial Building, (Lester Building) Stoneville (RK 1208, SL)

Grogan's Tourist Court, Madison (RK 1169, SL)

Mayodan Downtown District, Mayodan (RK 1463-1466, SL)

Smith's Grocery, Price vicinity (RK 1141, SL)

Stone Building, Stoneville (RK 1208, SL)

Thomas General Store, Stoneville (RK 1208, SL)

Wright Tavern, Wentworth (RK 7, NR 1970)

Significance

Commercial buildings are historically significant as centers of commerce and trade, which were central to their communities' development. These buildings also identity and reflect the economic fortunes of the county as influenced by transportation options, including historic stage routes, railroads, and the availability of the automobile in

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 135

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

the twentieth century. In rural areas, stores and later gas stations served as outposts where residents could socialize as well as purchase needed goods. Many are also architecturally significant as notable examples of a certain type of architecture or as representative examples of commercial design popular nationwide and statewide. Therefore, commercial buildings may be eligible under Criterion A as representatives of the county's community, commercial, and transportation development while some may be eligible under Criterion C as representative or exceptional examples of local commercial architecture.

Registration Requirements

To be eligible for listing in the National Register, a commercial building in Rockingham County must be fifty years old or older and retain integrity of location, setting, materials, design, and workmanship. Commercial buildings may be eligible for listing under Criterion A for their association with the county's rural commerce or under Criterion C for their architecture. Commercial buildings should retain their original locations, most of their original interior and exterior features, and their integrity of setting, association, and workmanship. Commercial buildings located in downtown business districts should not be necessarily excluded from the National Register due to first floor storefront alterations and interior remodeling as long as the upper levels remain intact and the building's size and form have not been altered. Many of the alterations to downtown commercial buildings are actually indicative of changes in commerce that accelerated particularly after World War II when more citizens had cars and could frequent stores farther from their own downtowns. In rural parts of the county, commercial buildings fell into disuse rather than undergoing the changes urban commercial buildings usually experienced over time. Deterioration precipitated by neglect and decay is typical of rural commercial buildings; unless it is extreme, it should not disqualify a building for listing.

Property Type 5: Industrial Buildings

Description

While most of the county's industry is centered in its larger towns, which are not addressed in this document, interesting and representative industrial buildings stand in the survey area. The largest industrial complex is the Mayo Mill in Mayodan. Although a few other additions and alterations have been made over the years, the Mayo Mill was built primarily in two major phases. The first, completed in 1891, is a three-story brick

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 136

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

building with segmental arch windows and two narrow towers with arched openings in the top bays on the riverside elevation. A larger tower that housed a water tank stood on the west elevation, but has been removed. In 1911, the Mayo expanded with a four-story brick annex topped by a shallow gable roof. Numerous other historic support buildings also stand at the complex. These include offices, warehouses, and a power plant.

Scattered about the county are smaller-scale industrial buildings. The Worsham Mill (RK 1493) is the only remaining gristmill outside Madison, Eden, and Reidsville in a county that was once home to at least seventy-five such mills. Built in 1908 after an older mill on the site burned, the three-story, frame, gable-front building has six-over-six sash windows and a tall fieldstone foundation. An overgrown millrace once directed the waters of Wolf Island Creek to the mill's waterwheel, which remains in place.

Tobacco factories, which looked much like large barns, were common sights on the county's farms in the nineteenth century, particularly in the first half of the century. Historically, over twenty-five stood on farms across the county, but today, only three are known to survive. The Mosley Tobacco Factory (RK 993), probably built in the 1840s or 1850s, is a two-story, heavy timber frame building in the Bethany area. Another was moved from the Lawsonville community to the Rockingham Community College campus (RK 1581). In the northwest section of Rockingham County, a double-pen, log tobacco factory that may date to the mid-1800s stands on the Garrett Farm (RK 1265). The Garretts built a second tobacco factory to the north, but it has recently collapsed. (The author of the family's history in the *Heritage of Rockingham County* states that one of these buildings was a cotton gin, but the current owner and family member described both as tobacco factories.)

The most unusual industrial building is a tomato cannery (RK 1517) located near Williamsburg. R. P. Richardson Jr. built the frame, two-story building around 1900. It is uncertain how long the building operated, but it is the only historic industrial building not related to tobacco, textile, or grain processing documented in the county. The gable-front building features irregularly spaced window openings, vertical wood siding, a double-leaf door of diagonally laid boards, and one-story shed rooms along the length of the west elevation. The interior was retrofitted with racks for hanging cured tobacco when the building was converted for use as a tobacco packhouse, presumably before the middle of the twentieth century.

Study List Properties

Garrett Farm and Tobacco Factory, Ayersville vicinity (RK 1265, SL)*
Mayo Mills, Mayodan (RK 1471, SL)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 137

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Richardson Tomato Cannery, Reidsville vicinity (RK 1517, SL)
Mosley Tobacco Factory, Bethany vicinity (RK 993, SL)
Worsham Mill, Ruffin vicinity (RK 1493, SL)

Significance

Industrial buildings are historically significant as representatives of the county's economic development, with the large-scale factories representing the twentieth-century shift in the county's economy from agrarian to industrial. Outside the towns of Madison, Reidsville, and Eden, industrial buildings are exceedingly rare; those surviving are significant under Criterion A for their association with the county's economy and under Criterion C as architecturally significant examples of an important building type.

Registration Requirements

To be eligible for the National Register, industrial buildings in Rockingham County must be fifty years old or older and retain integrity of setting, location, design, and workmanship. Rural industrial buildings are so rare that alterations made to keep the structure technologically viable or changes caused by neglect and decay should not prevent an industrial building from being listed as long as its original overall form and a majority of original materials is present. Alterations made more than fifty years ago should be considered part of the historic fabric.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number G Page 138

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

G. Geographic Data

Rockingham County, North Carolina

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number H Page 139

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

Over the last few decades the accelerated demise of Rockingham County's historic architecture due to neglect and developmental pressures, accompanied by the completion of architectural surveys and survey updates in Eden, Reidsville, and Madison, prompted interested local parties to seek funding for a survey of the county's rural and small-town architectural resources. In 2000, Robin Yount, Vice President for Tourism with the Rockingham County Partnership for Economic and Tourism Development applied for a grant from the North Carolina Office of Archives and History (OAH) to fund such a survey. The group was awarded the grant and garnered the necessary matching funds to support the twenty-month project. A local committee of Yount and local historians Lindley Butler, Charles Rodenbough, and Robert Carter chose Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc. to conduct the survey. At the state level, Nancy Van Dolsen, Michael Southern, and Claudia Brown oversaw the project. The project area covered the entire county, with the exception of the municipalities of Madison, Eden, and Reidsville.

The Rockingham County Architectural Survey was conducted over the projected twenty months. The survey began in October 2002 with a planning phase that included historical research and a review of Laura A. W. Phillips's 1998 reconnaissance survey. During the fieldwork, conducted between December 2001 and May 2003, the consultant traveled every public and accessible private road in the county. The project intended to document properties outside Madison, Eden, and Reidsville. Therefore, acreage annexed by Madison, Eden, or Reidsville since the time architectural surveys were conducted in those towns was not surveyed. The investigator stayed outside city limits except for a few times when the investigator was not entirely sure where the corporate limits were or when a notable or significant building in a recently annexed area appeared threatened by development.

Over eight hundred buildings, sites, and structures, including dwellings, farm outbuildings, churches, schools, cemeteries, bridges, industrial buildings, and commercial buildings, were documented in 459 files with photographs, written descriptions, oral histories when available, some historical research including deed research and a review of related family histories in *The Heritage of Rockingham County*, and site plans; recording of hundreds more was limited to map coding on United States Geological Survey (USGS) topographical maps. Information on these historic resources is contained in individual files compiled by the consultant and submitted to the OAH in Raleigh. The survey and documentation processes were conducted according to OAH standards and guidelines.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number H Page 140

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

As a result of the survey, individual resources and districts were placed on the OAH's National Register Study List. Properties on this list are those resources that appear to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The Study List is a critical component of the project and properties on the list are considered during the implementation of preservation planning projects. It should be noted, however, that including a building, site, or structure on the Study List does not mean it is actually listed in the National Register of Historic Places, nor does it mean the property is guaranteed listing if it is ever nominated to the Register. The list simply gives preservation planners and those people who administer the National Register program at the state level an idea of what properties are probably eligible for listing. Additionally, with further research and the passage of time, a building *not* now on the Study List may be eligible for the National Register. In other words, the Study List is a list of the "best of the best," but it should not be considered definitive or exclusive.

The survey of Rockingham County also produced color slides of the resources, presentations to county organizations, USGS topographical maps upon which the properties were coded, and this Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF).

At Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc., the primary investigator for the survey was Sarah A. Woodard, supervised by Jennifer F. Martin. Jeff Smith, an intern with Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc., provided historical research and fieldwork assistance. Robin Yount acted as the local coordinator and provided information about the county's current economic situation, which was useful for constructing a current picture of the county towards the conclusion of this MPDF. Local committee members Robert Carter and Lindley Butler provided invaluable information about individual properties, genealogy of county families, and the general history of the county. Hundreds of individuals provided historical information and personal stories about specific properties and the people associated with these sites.

The survey and the inventory of properties it produced are designed to encourage Rockingham County residents to preserve the surviving representatives of local history and culture. County residents' preservation ethic was apparent among the many individuals the consultant encountered who lamented the loss of numerous historic dwellings and buildings. It is also obvious through individual restoration projects undertaken by private citizens. Among them are Lindley and T Butler (Roach-Lasley-Butler House), J.A. and Honesta Dobyns (George D. and Minerva Boyd House), and Rolfe and Richard Teague (High Rock). Other private homeowners who simply preserve historic dwellings and outbuildings through regular maintenance and continued use are also to be lauded. In Stoneville, several downtown property owners, including Hugh and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number H Page 141

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

Barbara Belton, have engaged in extensive restoration or reconstruction projects following the devastating 1998 tornado. Their successes will encourage others to protect, maintain, and restore Rockingham County's unique built environment.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 1 Page 142

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 1 Page 143

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 1 Page 144

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County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 1 Page 145

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County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 1 Page 146

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County, North Carolina, ca. 1799-1953

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 1 Page 147

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rockingham
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