

# INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR

Fayetteville

MULTIPLE RESOURCE OR  THEMATIC NOMINATION

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC

Robert Strange Country House

AND/OR COMMON

Myrtle Hill

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

309 Kirkland Drive

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Fayetteville

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

7th

STATE

North Carolina

VICINITY OF

CODE  
037

COUNTY  
Cumberland

CODE  
051

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Percy A. Warren and Wife (Lots 3, 4, and 5)

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 666

CITY, TOWN

Fayetteville

VICINITY OF

STATE  
North Carolina 28302

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Register of Deeds, Cumberland County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 2039

CITY, TOWN

Fayetteville

STATE  
North Carolina 28302

## 6 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Linda Jasperse, Principal Investigator, City of Fayetteville

ORGANIZATION

Consultant for Survey and Planning Branch

DATE

March 31, 1982

STREET & NUMBER

Division of Archives and History, 109 E. Jones Street

TELEPHONE

1-919-733-6545

CITY OR TOWN

Raleigh

STATE  
North Carolina 27611

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Robert Strange

Country House  
Continuation sheet

Owner of Property

Item number

4

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Page

2

Owner of lots 1, 2, 6, and 7 is:

Nora B. Dowd  
P.O. Box 666  
Fayetteville, North Carolina 28302

Owner of Strange Family Cemetery and street access is:

Mr. Benjamin R. Huske  
B.R. Huske and Associates  
1308 Morganton Road  
Fayetteville, North Carolina 28305

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED    DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Robert Strange Country House c. 1825 is a one-and-one-half-story Federal dwelling which follows a four-room plan with central stair hall. It is one of a small group of extant Federal houses in Fayetteville and is distinguished from others, such as the Baker-Haigh-Nimocks House c. 1804 (NR) and the Mallett House c. 1830 (#1), by a cut sandstone block foundation and interior chimneys. The house was prominently connected with the life and career of one of Fayetteville's early leading citizens, lawyer, author, judge, and statesman Robert Strange, whose sphere of influence was statewide. The Robert Strange Country House is a local landmark associated strongly with the architectural and historical development of early Fayetteville.

The one-and-one-half-story gable-roof frame house was originally associated with an undeveloped 500 acre tract of land bordering the banks of the Cape Fear River and linked to town by a road paralleling the Raleigh Road. The house rests on an unusual and handsome sandstone foundation which encloses a raised, fenestrated basement. Its five-bay facade is punctuated by a central entrance flanked by 9/9 sash windows. Three gable dormers pierce the roof front and two interior chimneys the back slope. Additions to the main block include one-story hip-roof screened porches at each end and a one-and-one-half-story rear kitchen ell.

The front entrance is shielded by a gable portico supported by two Tuscan columns and having railings with both plain and turned balusters. Although the portico appears to be a replacement, it probably closely follows the lines of the original. The portico shields the single front door which is surrounded by 6/6 sash sidelights and a four-light transom. Characteristic of the Greek Revival, the front door treatment indicates the transitional nature of local architecture from Federal to Greek Revival between c. 1825 and c. 1835.

Interior rooms are arranged in double-pile fashion on either side of a central hall. Rooms are served by back-to-back fireplaces, with main room mantels of notable Federal design. Consistent features throughout include wide pine board flooring, chair rail and simple baseboards, plaster walls, and six flat-panel doors. An unusual round arch doorway permits passage between the west side parlors. Staircases leading from the central hall allow access to other floors; at the front of the hall is a straight stair leading to the basement, and at its rear is an enclosed staircase with curved winders which leads to the upper half story. Upstairs bedrooms are also arranged on either side of a central hall.

Related outbuildings include a spring house and a summer kitchen which postdates the original. The Strange family graveyard is located nearby.

**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

\_\_\_\_ NATIONAL

\_\_\_\_ <sup>x</sup> STATE

\_\_\_\_ LOCAL

## PERIOD

## AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

## SPECIFIC DATES

c. 1825

## BUILDER/ARCHITECT

unknown

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Robert Strange Country House c. 1825 is a one-and-one-half-story frame Federal dwelling which is linked stylistically to other local dwellings such as the Baker-Haigh-Nimocks House, c. 1804 (NR), but is distinguished by a four-room plan with central stair hall, two interior back slope chimneys, and a handsome cut sandstone block foundation. The house and its original accompanying 500-acre tract bordering the banks of the Cape Fear River just north of Fayetteville were known as Myrtle Hill, the residence of prominent judge, lawyer, author, and statesman Robert Strange. He is best known for writing Eoneguski, or the The Cherokee Chief (1839), the first novel about North Carolina. His house is not only a representative example of the Federal style but stands as a reminder of a man whose sphere of influence was statewide and who greatly contributed to the development of early Fayetteville.

## CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

- B. As lawyer, judge, member of the House of Commons and United States senator, and author of Eoneguski, the first novel about North Carolina, Robert Strange had widespread influence and contributed greatly to the development of early Fayetteville.
- C. The one-and-one-half-story frame gable-end house is a fine example of the Federal style as is apparent in door, window, interior woodwork, and mantel treatment. It is one of the few extant early Fayetteville structures and is distinguished by a four-room plan with central hall, double interior back slope chimneys, and a handsome cut sandstone block foundation. Once accompanied by 500 acres of land, the house has associated with it a spring house and the Strange family cemetery from its early period.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The lands upon which the Robert Strange Country House known as "Myrtle Hill" is situated were acquired by Robert Strange in small parcels between March, 1820, and January, 1826. Total acreage on the tract "bounded on the East by the Cape Fear River" about three miles north of Fayetteville came close to five hundred. This is where Robert Strange built the house in which by 1828 he came to reside.<sup>1</sup> Myrtle Hill was home for Robert, his first wife, Jane Rebecca, at least five children, slaves, horses, and livestock.<sup>2</sup>

Robert Strange was born at Manchester, Virginia, on 20 September 1796.<sup>3</sup> He had relocated in Cumberland County by 1815 where he became one of the area's most prominent residents.<sup>4</sup> His major contributions were threefold. First, he was a respected member of the legal profession, serving not only as a practicing lawyer but as a judge of the Superior Court (1826-1836) and solicitor of the Fifth Judicial Circuit (post-1840).<sup>5</sup> He kept a law library of just over 330 volumes at Myrtle Hill for ready reference. The titles covered legal history, state and local laws statutes, (New Revised Laws of North Carolina, for example) the Constitution, legal reports and proceedings (including a two-volume set entitled Stranges Reports), individual aspects of a law practice (Chitty's Criminal Law, Verplank on Contracts) and more.<sup>6</sup> In 1850, Robert Strange even participated at the defense in a highly-publicized murder trial, where Ann K. Simpson was accused but acquitted of her husband's untimely death.<sup>7</sup> These testify to the range of Robert Strange's ability and experience.

Second, Robert Strange was a statesman. He was a member of the House of Commons from Fayetteville between 1821 and 1823 and then again in 1826. In 1836, he was elected to the United States Senate and served in that body until 1840.<sup>8</sup> At forty-four years of age, then, Robert Strange had already served a judgeship as well as terms of service in state and federal governing bodies. He was also to serve in the capacity of a state solicitor.

It was during his senate years that Strange made yet a third contribution; he wrote a book entitled Eoneguski or The Cherokee Chief (pub. 2 vol. 1839). Though he published reports and tried creative writing, Strange produced no more novels. Eoneguski--a story of Cherokee life, conflict with white settlers, and eventually removal--was inspired during Strange's judgeship. As a circuit-rider, he visited courthouse communities like Asheville, Franklin, and others in the mountains near the Cherokees' native homes and became acquainted with Indian lore. The resultant story has the distinction of being the first novel written about North Carolina.<sup>9</sup>

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Branson, A.L. Rev., ed. North Carolina Business Directory. Raleigh: Branson and Jones Publishers, 1867-8.

Chapel Hill, North Carolina. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Miscellaneous Maps. Map of Cumberland County.

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 5.50

UTM REFERENCES

A	17	693760	3885070	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All of Lots 1,2,3,4,5,6, and 7, Block 7, Plat Map Book 11, Page 44, as outlined in red on map. Also included is the Strange family cemetery and street access as outlined in red on map. See map section.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

Robert Strange Country House  
Historical Background

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page

2

This well-known man owned much acreage and property in Cumberland County, including another house located at the foot of Haymount. Evidence suggests, however, that Myrtle Hill became his permanent home. There he had a well-furnished six-room house which would have accommodated his family, a library to aid him in his law practice, and extensive acreage.<sup>10</sup> The location was slightly removed from the northern town limits, but was linked to it by a road paralleling and converging with the Raleigh Road, a major north-south route.<sup>11</sup> The house also stood within the census-taker's "Northern District", where the Stranges are listed in the United States Census of 1850.<sup>12</sup> It became the final resting place of two of his children who were born there in 1828 and 1830, his wife (d.1845), and, finally, Strange himself (d.1854).<sup>13</sup> This implies occupancy over a period of years.

After Robert Strange's death (which was marked by a tribute of respect issued by St. John's Episcopal Church in Fayetteville on 20 February 1854<sup>14</sup>), a son, James W., acquired ownership of Myrtle Hill. This transfer was executed by purchase at public auction rather than by will.<sup>15</sup> James W. Strange was a farmer, grocer, and a Confederate soldier, serving first as Captain in the 19th Regiment, Company D, and then transferring to the Sixth Battalion, Company F.<sup>16</sup> It remained in his immediate family for approximately three decades.

In 1892, the property minus the family cemetery was deeded to wealthy New York philanthropist Eva S. Cochran.<sup>17</sup> During her tenure in Fayetteville she had numerous people in her employ at Myrtle Hill and is thought to have carried on farming operations there. She financed several local projects while in the area, such as the building of St. Joseph's Episcopal Church in 1896 (NR) and the building of the Cochran Annex at Highsmith Hospital which contained charity beds for both white and colored patients.<sup>18</sup> She remembered both of these institutions, several people who had been in her employ at Myrtle Hill, and other local people in her will which was probated in 1909.<sup>19</sup>

In the same year, Myrtle Hill was deeded to Samuel H. Strange, son of James W. Strange.<sup>20</sup> The last member of the Strange family to hold the property was Joseph Strange Huske, during whose ownership from 1926 to 1944 the 452 acre tract was parceled and sold for residential development purposes.<sup>21</sup> The Robert Strange Country House and accompanying lot were sold to Nora B. Dowd in 1944 and are currently in the possession of her daughter and son-in-law Cleo and Percy Warren.<sup>22</sup> Although the surrounding area is much changed, the house is well-maintained and serves as an important reminder of people and places that shaped Fayetteville's early history.

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Robert Strange Country House

Continuation sheet Historical Background

Item number 8

Page 3

Reference Notes

<sup>1</sup>Robert Strange's son, John Kirkland, has "Born at Myrtle Hill" inscribed on his tombstone (the tombstone is located in the Strange Cemetery at Myrtle Hill). This implies that the family was settled at the location at least by 8 February 1828, the date of John Kirkland's birth.

<sup>2</sup>Complete household inventory listed in Cumberland County Deeds, Book 40, Page 267.

<sup>3</sup>Information from Robert Strange's tombstone, Strange Cemetery, Myrtle Hill, Fayetteville, N.C., as gathered by the Colonel Robert Rowan Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, city same; hereafter cited as Strange Cemetery Records.

<sup>4</sup>Fayetteville Observer, 20 February 1854.

<sup>5</sup>John Hill Wheeler, History of North Carolina (Philadelphia, 1851; reprint ed. Baltimore: Regional Publishing Company, 1964), pp. 106, 130.

<sup>6</sup>Cumberland County Deeds, Book 40, page 267.

<sup>7</sup>John A. Oates, The Story of Fayetteville and the Upper Cape Fear (Charlotte, NC: The Dowd Press, Inc., 1950; reprint ed., Raleigh, NC: Litho Industries Incorporated, 1972), p. 809-10.

<sup>8</sup>Wheeler, pp. 130-131.

<sup>9</sup>Robert Strange, Eoneguski or The Cherokee Chief (1839; reprint ed., Charlotte: McNally, 1960, with notes and foreward by Richard Walser), from front flyleaves.

<sup>10</sup>Cumberland County Deeds, Book 40, Page 267.

<sup>11</sup>1863 Map of Cumberland County, from Miscellaneous Maps in the North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>12</sup>United States Census of 1850, Cumberland County, North Carolina, p. 313.

<sup>13</sup>Strange Cemetery Records.

<sup>14</sup>Fayetteville Observer, 23 February 1854.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Robert Strange Country House Item number 8 Historical Page 4

Background

<sup>15</sup> See advertisement for "Large Sale of Real Estate" in Fayetteville Observer, 12 June 1854; coupled with Cumberland County Deeds Book 59, Page 154.

<sup>16</sup> United States Census of 1850, Cumberland County, North Carolina, p. 313; Census of 1860, p. 106; Rev. A.L. Branson, A.M. editor, North Carolina Business Directory (Raleigh: Branson and Jones, Publishers, 1867-8), p. 36; Oates, pp. 384, 388.

<sup>17</sup> Cumberland County Deeds, Book 94, Pages 184, 185, 186; see also Book 99, Page 77.

<sup>18</sup> Junior Service League of Fayetteville, A Guide to Historic Fayetteville and Cumberland County (Fayetteville: Highland Printers, 1976), pp. 21; Oates, pp. 253.

<sup>19</sup> Cumberland County Wills, Book F, Page 556.

<sup>20</sup> Cumberland County Deeds, Book 155, Pages 52 and 398.

<sup>21</sup> Cumberland County Deeds, Book 322, Page 191; Book 468, Page 148 (one parcel); see also Book 469, Page 33 for restrictive covenants and Plat Book 10, Page 73 for lot lines.

<sup>22</sup> Cumberland County Deeds, Book 468, Page 148; Book 2076, Page 425.

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Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

Continuation sheet Robert Strange Country House Item number 9 Bibliographical  
References Page 2

Cumberland County Records: Deeds, Plat Books, Wills.

Fayetteville Observer February 20, 23, June 12, 1854.

Junior Service League of Fayetteville, A Guide to Historic Fayetteville and Cumberland County. Fayetteville: Highland Printers, 1976.

Oates, John A. The Story of Fayetteville and the Upper Cape Fear. Charlotte, N.C.: The Dowd Press, Inc., 1950; reprint ed., Raleigh, N.C.: Litho Industries Inc., 1972.

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Strange, Robert. Eoneguski or The Cherokee Chief 1839; reprint ed. Charlotte: McNally, 1960.

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Wheeler, John Hill. History of North Carolina. Philadelphia, 1851; reprint ed., Baltimore: Regional Publishing Company, 1964.

