

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Pittsboro Masonic Lodge (Columbus Lodge No. 102)

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER NW corner East St. (US 64) and Masonic Street

CITY, TOWN

Pittsboro

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

4th

STATE

North Carolina

CODE

37

COUNTY

Chatham

CODE

37

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 type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	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 type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Fraternal

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mr. W. L. Dean, Worshipful Master

STREET & NUMBER

Central Carolina Bank, P. O. Box 398

CITY, TOWN

Pittsboro

VICINITY OF

STATE

North Carolina 27312

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Chatham County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Pittsboro

STATE

North Carolina

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

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		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Masonic Hall is situated on the northwest corner of Route 64 and Masonic Street, one block east of Pittsboro's courthouse square. Built on a gentle slope of land that rises to the north, the building enjoys a generous surrounding lawn to its north and west sides. The narrow, twenty-four feet wide parcel that was originally deeded to the lodge undoubtedly accounts for the building being sited so close to the corner. A nineteenth century, one room building, restored as the Governor Charles Manly law office, was relocated in 1970 to the north of the lodge on land to which the fraternal organization owns title. The 1850 Pittsboro Presbyterian Church is the hall's nearest neighbor on the west. Recent development has occurred across the streets that corner the masonic lodge; on the northeast corner of the intersection, a car dealership has spread its lot, while on the southside of Route 64, a supermarket and fast-food restaurant now stand.

Consistent with masonic tradition, the building originally may have been oriented toward the east. As such it was a two-story structure with the ridge of its gabled roof parallel to Masonic Street. The east and west elevations were each three bays wide, with the main entrance placed in the central bay on the east. The north elevation was two bays wide, and it is assumed that the south one was similar. A very simple building with little architectural adornment, it was soon deemed inadequate to the needs of the Masons.

Less than a decade after its construction, the hall was dramatically changed by the enlargement of the upper room. This took the form of a second-story overhang on the south side supported by a portico. The impressive new façade, which incorporated some of the stylistic characteristics of the popular Greek Revival style, changed the orientation of the hall so that the south door became the main entrance. The architectural embellishment of this new section was in contrast to the plain, utilitarian treatment of the original structure.

The Masonic Hall rests upon a rubble stone foundation that was probably built around 1846, at which time the lodge minutes record the need for "underpinning." Until that time, the building may not have had a stone substructure. The walls of the frame structure are of weatherboards on the west, north and east sides and flush sheathing on the south wall, overhang, and pediment. Except for the white pillars and window frames and contrasting shutters, the entire building recently has been repainted a mustard color. It was undoubtedly white during the mid-1800s, as this was the popular color for Greek Revival buildings, and there are references in the minutes to whitewashing. Although it now is covered with galvanized tin, the roof definitely was shingled, as payments for shingles are noted also in the minutes. The lodge was heated by stoves as early as the 1840s, and the chimney at the northwest corner, which has been rebuilt numerous times, served as the ventilating flue.

The windows of the original main block have molded wood frames and sills. The second floor's double-hung sash of nine-over-nine lights are original to the building, while all of the first floor sash were replaced in 1901 with double-hung sash of two-over-two lights. All panes of glass throughout the building have been painted opaque in keeping with the masonic code of secrecy, and many first floor windows are boarded as an added measure. Window blinds are mentioned as early as 1853 in the lodge minutes,

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and it is assumed that the present louvered ones were modeled after the originals, many of which remained in poor condition on second floor windows until the late 1960s. The old east doorway, which has been closed off from the interior, has a very simple molded frame with no other special treatment. Its former stairway is notably absent, and its six-panel flat paneled door is nearly identical to the one of the south elevation.

The 1849 addition can be seen as an attempt to modernize the lodge into a variation of the classical temple form. Although far from a model temple, many of the elements do exist: a portico across the entire front rising from a platform-like base, a pediment created by the box cornice across the gable end, and the roof ridge running from the main elevation back. The lodge members chose the four "square columns" to be the primary architectural statement. This type of column may have been preferred over the vetoed fluted columns since they are more typical of the Masons' Egyptian origins. Constructed of wood with a marked upward taper, the columns are stylizations rather than copies of classical models. Boxed corner posts at each end of the south elevation are treated as pilasters and rise to the height of the portico. The trim of the second-story overhang, namely the narrow, molded pilaster strips at the four corners of the projection and the molded window frames with their corner blocks of incised eastern stars, was, judging from other evidence, not part of the mid-century addition but rather was executed during the late 1890s improvements. The triangular, wedge-like projection beneath the east corner of the overhang was also done at the end of the century when a new stairway was installed.

From the grade level to the front entrance runs a brick stairway of a dozen steps. The actual porch is at a level approximately two-thirds of the way up the stairway, and access to it from the steps is very awkward because of the intersecting angles. Originally constructed of brick, the entire porch surface has had an application of concrete. The decorative, iron railings around the porch and along the stairs were installed in 1970. The frame of the main entrance door is not typical of the Greek Revival period in that it has a semi-circular fanlight. The hemisphere is divided into two lights by a vertical muntin. Since there is a distinct possibility that this door frame was an original feature--and because of its embellishment, the main door--the traditional belief concerning the east doorway being the original entrance may be incorrect.

The first floor of the lodge has been used for a great variety of purposes, and certain modifications were made throughout the nineteenth century to accommodate different uses. For example, in 1851 when the Sons of Temperance wanted to rent the lower room, the minutes mention a "partition run across the lower room for the purpose of having said meetings not to interfere with the meetings of the lodge." Early reference is also made to an "ante room", perhaps an entrance vestibule near the east door. A small vestibule is now located at the south entrance, from which the late

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nineteenth century stairway ascends to the second floor. The west, north, and east walls of the main room are covered with twelve to fourteen inch wide horizontal flush board, while the south wall is paneled with narrow, horizontal tongue and groove paneling of the late nineteenth century. A toilet is located in the southwest corner of the first floor, and a closet diagonally cuts the southeast corner of the main room. With the exception of the molded enframement around the east door, door frames are crudely executed and lack moldings. Two wooden poles placed along the longitudinal axis of the room support the upper floor.

The Masons' main meeting room is located on the second story, and the original size of the lodge room is indicated clearly by the change in ceiling boards on the south side. Four steps descend to the room, and a step platform, apparently constructed in the early twentieth century, surrounds all four sides. Along the north wall, three steps rise to the "Master's Carpet." A simple two feet high dado, of vertical and horizontal members applied to slush board, surrounds the room; above this level, the walls are plastered.

The most interesting woodwork in the lodge is located in the southwest corner room of the second floor, which was no doubt the object of the late 1890s interior "beautifying." Although the original purpose of this room is not known, it may have served as an office. The upper cornerblocks of the window frames are carved with the same recessed five-point star pattern that appears on the exterior overhang. The intricately executed two feet high dado is marked by a tripartite composition of narrow, concave moldings. The character of this one small room is thus in contrast to that of the main part of the lodge.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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 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 checked="" 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 1838-ca. 1840, 1850

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Pittsboro Masonic Lodge (Columbus Lodge Number 102) is one of the oldest still-functioning Masonic halls in the state. It has long been a pivotal institution in Pittsboro, both as an architecturally striking landmark and as a facility for varied community use. Construction began in 1838, with local carpenter/builder Martin Hanks in charge. In 1846, lodge minutes indicate, the structure was enlarged by the addition of the distinctive pedimented second-story overhang carried on heavy square pillars. Since the early years of its history, the lodge has permitted the community "to use the lower part of the house for church and other purposes."

Columbus Lodge Number 102 was chartered on December 29, 1837.¹ Two masonic lodges previously had existed in Pittsboro (Independence Lodge Number 12, chartered in 1788, and Social Lodge Number 46, chartered in 1804), but both had long since dissolved when the town's third lodge was established. There are thirty-three masonic lodges in the state that are considered to be older than Columbus Lodge, and while many more retain numbers lower than 102; this is due to the³ fact that many of the early lodges went out of existence and were later reestablished.

The hall's June 23, 1838 cornerstone attests to the fact that the Masons soon began the construction of their lodge building. However, the minutes of their meetings indicate that the building was far from finished in that year. On January 1, 1839,⁴ three men were appointed to find a room in which to hold the next month's meeting. Some difficulty was occurring regarding the fulfillment of the terms of the building contract. Four months later, it was resolved that "the building committee shall have full power to proceed to complete the original contract with Brothers Hanks and Collier and failing therein⁵ make other contract or contracts as they deem best to finish work on the Lodge Hall."⁵ Martin Hanks, who at that time served the lodge office of steward, was one of Pittsboro's early carpenter/builders. He and his brother Wesley later built the Greek Revival Baptist Church in 1847, and in an advertisement in an 1866 newspaper, it was noted that Martin Hanks could "execute all kinds of cabinet work and carpenter's work of all descriptions."⁶ Isaac J. Collier, Secretary of the lodge, and Martin Hanks may not have finished the work they had undertaken, since two years later, the minutes record that the building committee⁷ was to meet with a Mr. S. Brassington, who previously had been paid one hundred dollars. The exact completion date of the lodge was never noted in the minutes.

Financial difficulties over paying for the new building continued to plague the Masons through the early 1840s.⁸ The building committee solicited funds, "both notes and money," for the purpose of paying for the lodge in the spring of 1842. The following fall, the building committee met again to make arrangements to pay the debt. Matters became so serious that by July, 1844, an attempt was made to repurchase the lodge

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from Brother Foushee, who apparently held the lein on its mortgage. Finally, the following summer Foushee loaned the lodge the balance of money due to pay the debt hanging over the lodge. Thus it was not until August, 1845, that jeopardizing financial problems were resolved. Ownership of the land upon which the lodge was built was not retained until five years after construction had begun. On September 6, 1843, Joseph Ramsey, Esquire sold Oliver L. Burch, Master of the lodge, "a part of Lot No. 55 in the plan of the Town of Pittsborough fronting 24 feet and running back 36 feet upon which the Masonic Hall now stands." The land acutally had changed hands once since construction had begun, since the deed noted that Ramsey purchased the land from John Harmon in 1840. This delay in obtaining the title further emphasizes the unstable financial situation caused by constructing the lodge.

In 1846, only eight years after the building's cornerstone was laid, a report was made on the necessity of making certain repairs, "underpinning" being the most important. The following year, the exterior was painted, perhaps for the first time, and the interior was plastered. In 1848, a Mr. McCoy was paid the considerable sum of sixty dollars for his work on the lodge. Although the building was less than a decade old, in 1849 a committee was appointed to investigate the enlargement of the lodge room.¹⁰

As is traditional with masonic custom, the lodge room was located on the upper floor as a measure of secrecy. To make amends for the inadequate space of the original structure, an addition on the south elevation was achieved by means of a second story overhang supported by a portico. The creation of this impressive, new facade created a change in the orientation of the building, which formerly had faced east, as is common of masonic tradition. The minutes of the April 25, 1849, meeting provide an interesting insight into the members' involvement in the decisions on the new addition's architectural elements. Brother William Riddle moved that the committee be instructed to have "fluted columns" put up in front of the lodge. This motion lost, and Brother W. P. Taylor then moved that the committee erect "square columns." It would have been interesting to know why the fluted columns were rejected. Six months later, the building committee was instructed to "furnish the lodge in a genteel, substantial and comfortable manner."¹¹ The following spring, over one hundred dollars was paid for repairs to the lodge. These records all conclusively point to a mid-nineteenth century date for the south addition and its portico, and not an 1880s date as previously has been stated.

Very early in the history of the lodge, it was decided that "Sitsons [citizens]"¹² were to be allowed to use the lower part of the house for church and other purposes. Throughout the nineteenth century, a great variety of local civic groups benefitted from the use of the masonic facilities. Occasionally, rent was charged for the lower room, as when schoolteachers, such as Dr. Morgan Clop, used the hall to teach school for an extended period of time. Many public exhibitions and musical concerts were held there,

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and traveling photographers availed themselves of the space. Such organizations as the Knights of Pythias, the Sons of Temperance and the women's group of the neighboring Presbyterian church held their meetings at the lodge. When a destructive storm in 1875 rendered the church unfit for services, the Presbyterians convened inside the lodge. Thus the Masonic Hall met many of the community's needs for a public meeting place. The Masons also performed many fraternal duties, the encouragement of education being one of the foremost. Orphaned children's tuition was often paid, and the brothers were generous to many unfortunate families of Pittsboro.

Interest in lodge activities appears to have subsided following the Civil War. In 1873, the lower part of the lodge was rented on a monthly basis to a Peter Doub, provided he pay for an insurance policy.¹³ This tends to suggest that Doub used the quarters as his residence. About the same time, an estimate of approximately one hundred dollars was made for "refitting" the lodge; however, this was never acted upon. The minutes of the lodge end with August 22, 1876, and in 1878, the Grand Lodge of North Carolina reported that the Columbus Lodge had forfeited its charter for delinquency in payment of dues for two or more years.¹⁴ It is not known whether the building was occupied in any way following this disbandment, especially since its legal title was in question.

The Chatham Record of September 24, 1891, ran an article on the Masonic Lodge, an excerpt of which follows:

. . . it was in quite a prosperous condition until about twenty years ago, when so little interest was taken in it that its charter was surrendered and the organization was dissolved. Recently, however, some of the old members determined to revive the old lodge and its charter was returned. . .

Since a relatively short period of time had elapsed and many of the same members were involved, the designation as Lodge 102 was returned. Chief among those who had instigated the lodge's revival was William L. London, who was elected Worshipful Master. London belonged to a prominent Pittsboro family and served many important civic roles, such as first president of the Bank of Pittsboro, organizer of the first railroad line to the town, officer of the Odell Manufacturing Company, and owner of one of Pittsboro's chief mercantile outlets.

A few years after the lodge was reinstated, contributors were solicited "towards beautifying" the inside of the hall.¹⁶ Many of the late nineteenth century changes evident in the interior, such as the partition wall in the lower room, the stairway to the second floor, and the woodwork of the second floor's southwest room, no doubt date to this late 1890s remodeling. Twentieth century changes to the building have been relatively minor, and no alterations to the basic plan have occurred. The lodge has

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continued to be active to the present time since its reinstatement in 1891. The current members are aware of the historical importance of their building and have tried to comply with restoration recommendations made in the late 1960s by the Historic Sites section of North Carolina's Division of Archives and History.

Footnotes

¹"Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Ancient York Masons of North Carolina, A. L. 5837", pp. 8-9 in: Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina and Tennessee, 1804-1840 (Oxford, N.C.: Orphan Asylum Press, 1901).

²Letter from Charles A. Harris, Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina, to Mrs. Doris Horton of Pittsboro, June 8, 1970.

³Ibid. See enclosed xerox of "Lodges under jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina."

⁴Minutes of Columbus Lodge No. 102, as selected and transcribed by Doris Horton. The lodge retains ownership of the original minutes, which begin on November 8, 1838, and allowed Mrs. Horton permission to read them for the preparation of her article, "Columbus Lodge No. 102 has Great Heritage," The North Carolina Mason, (May, 1970) p. 5.

⁵Ibid., April 3, 1839.

⁶Semi-Monthly Record of the Pittsboro Scientific Academy, August 1, 1866.

⁷Minutes of Columbus Lodge, February 2, 1841.

⁸Ibid., May 10, 1842; September 5, 1843; July 2, 1844; and August 12, 1845.

⁹Chatham County Book of Deeds AH, pp. 399-400. Although the 1840s date is illegible, it would appear to be 1843 since the August 15, 1843 lodge minutes call for the procurement of the title from Ramsey.

¹⁰The information in this paragraph derives from the Minutes of Columbus Lodge, September 22, 1846; June 25, 1847; July 7, 1847; March 21, 1848; August 2, 1848; and February 20, 1849.

¹¹Ibid., October 16, 1849.

¹²Ibid., February 9, 1841.

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¹³ Ibid., June 2, 1873.

¹⁴ Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina (1878), p. 16.

¹⁵ History of Chatham County, 1771-1971, ed. by Wade Hadley (Durham, N.C.: Moore Publishing Company, 1971), pp. 420-421.

¹⁶ Minutes of Columbus Lodge, December 7, 1897.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Chatham County Records. Chatham County Courthouse. Pittsboro, North Carolina.

Subgroup: Deeds.

Hadley, Wade, editor. History of Chatham County, 1771-1971. Durham; Moore Publishing Company, 1971.

Minutes of Columbus Lodge No. 102, 1838-1897. Transcribed by Doris Horton, from original in possession of lodge.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	7	6	6	5	0	2	10	3	9	5	4	2	6	10
ZONE			EASTING				NORTHING							

B

ZONE			EASTING				NORTHING							

C

ZONE			EASTING				NORTHING							

D

ZONE			EASTING				NORTHING							

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE Description and Significance prepared by Mary Ellen Gadski, Consultant

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Division of Archives and History

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

109 East Jones St.

733-4763

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Raleigh

North Carolina, 27611

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE September 8, 1977

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I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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"Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Ancient York Masons of North Carolina", A. L. 5837,
in Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina and Tennessee, 1804-1840.
Oxford, North Carolina: Orphan Asylum Press, 1901.



CHARLES MANLY
1840-1890
Manly House - His law
office - indicated in
ground floor plan.