United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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 Strawberry Hill

and/or common

2. Location

street & number S. side of Church Street Ext. at Jct. of SR 1105 ___ not for publication

city, town Edenton __________________ vicinity of congressional district First

state North Carolina code 037 county Chowan code 041

3. Classification

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<th>Status</th>
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<td>___ unoccupied</td>
<td>___ commercial</td>
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<td>___ work in progress</td>
<td>___ educational</td>
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<td>___ entertainment</td>
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<td>___ being considered</td>
<td>___ yes: unrestricted</td>
<td>___ industrial</td>
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4. Owner of Property

name Mrs. A. C. Boyce

street & number Box 328

city, town Edenton __________________ vicinity of state North Carolina 27932

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Chowan County Courthouse

street & number Corner of E. King and Court Streets

city, town Edenton state North Carolina 27932

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title ____________________ has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no

date ______________________ federal ____ state ____ county ____ local

depository for survey records ______________________

city, town _____________ state _____________
Strawberry Hill is a handsome late eighteenth century plantation house standing on a spacious lot dotted with massive trees. Although within the Edenton city limits, and somewhat truncated in recent years, the dwelling site retains much of its original rural character. Strawberry Hill was built as a transitional late Georgian/early Federal sidehall plan dwelling two rooms deep and two stories high with an unfinished attic beneath a gable roof. It measured three bays wide and four deep, with a shallow breezeway connecting the first floor rear room to an out kitchen two bays deep and three wide.

During the early to middle nineteenth century the house was enlarged by a two-story extension, two bays wide and three deep, on its eastern side, thus converting the plantation to a center hall plan dwelling two rooms deep. At the same time an impressive two-tiered front porch was attached to the main (north) facade. Its shed roof kicks outward from the main gable roof in a fashion characteristic of much of the domestic architecture of the Albemarle Sound region.

In the first quarter of the twentieth century, a second-story full-length rear addition was built, the kitchen breezeway enclosed, and a small shed addition attached to the western elevation of the kitchen. In addition, a series of ground level stepped-plan porches was constructed along the rear of the house. Despite these later additions, the integrity of the original core and the nineteenth century extension has been well maintained.

The house rests on a pierced brick foundation laid in one-to-three common bond on the west and in regular bond on the east. It is a frame structure sheathed with weatherboard which is beaded on the main facade and west elevation, and has cornerposts and rakeboards of plain board. Located on the western elevation are two exterior end chimneys which are laid in random three-to-one common bond and have single, paved shoulders, corbelled caps and stepped bases. A single interior chimney straddles the ridge line of the eastern addition to the house, and another exterior common bond brick chimney adjoins the rear (south) elevation of the kitchen.

The asymmetrical fenestration of the front facade further indicates the later addition. The first floor windows contain nine-over-nine sash with six-over-six sash in the south-west room; the second floor windows contain six-over-six sash, with four-over-four sash in the southwest room. Each window is surmounted by a flush splayed lintel, framed by a plain board surround with a narrow sill, and flanked by two panel movable louvered blinds. This consistency is apparently the result of an early to mid-nineteenth century renovation dating from the time when the front porch was added.

Both levels of the front porch contain six symmetrically placed square-in-section chamfered posts, each with stepped fillet neck molding beneath square caps. The upper porch is enclosed by a balustrade composed of a rounded handrail, square-in-section footrail, and rectangular-in-section balusters. The first story central entrance is a single leaf door containing six raised beveled panels arranged in two vertical tiers, framed by a double-strip Federal surround, and crowned by a four-light transom. Directly above, on the second story, is an entrance which, except for the fact that it lacks a transom, is identically treated.

The interior of Strawberry Hill retains the simplicity and dignity of the exterior. The first floor center stair hall, two rooms deep on either side, is strikingly accented
by a classic Federal arrangement of an elliptical transverse arch which rests on reeded engaged posts and carries a reeded soffit, scalloped archivolt, and raised keystone. To the rear of the hall is an open string stair which rises north to south from the east wall of the hall. The stair consists of three runs of unequal length separated by two quarter turn landings which together form a rectangular well. Thin square-in-section rectangular balusters support the rounded handrail which terminates in a square-in-section rectangular newel topped by a cap adorned only with ovolo necking.

The center stair hall is trimmed with raised beveled paneled wainscoting skirted by a beaded baseboard and a heavily molded torus, bead, and fillet chair-rail. The rear room adjoining the hall to the southwest is trimmed in the same manner, while the adjacent northwest front room features a flat-paneled wainscot and a simple picture molding. Both first floor rooms to the east, of a later period, contain flat-paneled wainscoting with thin beaded baseboards and chair-rails. Woodwork in the second level is quite simple: all of the rooms, including the hall and the single large east room, have an ovolo molded baseboard, while the hall and the two west rooms also contain a similarly cut chair-rail. None of the rooms contain wainscoting.

Interior doors are uniformly treated with raised beveled paneled front leaves and flat-paneled rears. All doors in the eastern half of the house have four raised panels while those in the older section have either four panels, or more frequently, six panels with a circular opening set in each uppermost panel.

Three of the mantels in the western part of the house are of a vernacular Georgian character. The mantel in the first floor rear room consists of a new surround framed by plain beaded boards with a dramatically splayed scotia curved frieze. The mantel shelf is underlined with bands of cyma, recta, cyma reversa, and fillet moldings. The second floor front mantel also has a new surround with a plain beaded board architrave surmounted by a beaded torus molded ledge above which is an oversize frieze with two large rectangular raised panels. Fillet, bead, and cyma recta moldings form the bedding for the mantel shelf. The second floor rear room mantel is similarly designed but lacks the large paneled frieze.

The first floor front west room has a handsome tripartite Federal mantel with reeded pilasters, raised-paneled frieze and raised end-blocks. Delicate and rather profuse reeding frames the center panel and underlines the mantel shelf. The raised endblocks feature unusual ornamentation--each is inset with a roundel containing a four-part stylized pinwheel design done in bas-relief.

The east chimney has no second floor flue and the first floor east rear room mantel is missing. The first floor front east room mantel is obviously a replacement and is of much later vintage than the rest of the house. It is machine-made and probably dates from the 1870's. The mantel consists of a raised-panel architrave
and a frieze ornamented with a horizontal raised-panel with rounded ends which break in the center to frame a raised diamond. The mantel shelf is supported on boldly molded consoles.

Strawberry Hill is a remarkably chaste and unpretentious example of plantation architecture in the Edenton vicinity. The impact of the dwelling stems from no single feature but from overall dignity of the whole.

The structure of course is closely related to the surrounding environment. Archaeological remains, such as trash pits, wells, and structural remains, which may be present, can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the structure. Information concerning use patterns, social standing, and mobility, as well as structural details are often only evident in the archaeological record. Therefore, archaeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the structure. At this time no investigation has been done to discover these remains, but it is probable that they exist, and this should be considered in any development of the property.
Located just outside the historic town of Edenton, Strawberry Hill is a distinctive and well-preserved example of an Albemarle plantation house which has evolved through three major stylistic developments: Late Georgian, Federal, and Victorian. The original structure was possibly of hall-and-parlor plan with Late Georgian detailing, and it was later enlarged and remodeled at some date in the early nineteenth to a Federal side-hall plan. In the late antebellum period, the dwelling was further enlarged and renovated, and it stands today as an imposing two-story structure of double pile center-hall plan with a typical coastal Carolina two-tier porch. The original portion of the house was apparently built and named in the late 1780s by Charles Johnson, a prominent Edenton merchant, Revolutionary patriot, and Chowan County politician. An avowed Federalist, Johnson was elected to the Seventh Congress of the United States as a representative in 1801, which culminated a long and distinguished career in North Carolina politics. As the plantation home of a United States congressmen, Strawberry Hill is of considerable historical significance, and it stands today as a notable reminder of the Albemarle plantation society.

The first recorded owner of the land upon which Strawberry Hill now stands was Captain Nicholas Crisp (d.1726), whose name appears in the records of Chowan Precinct as early as 1692. Crisp was a prominent figure in early eighteenth century Chowan, serving among other positions as a member of the Assembly in 1708 and 1709 and as a justice of the general court in 1714 and 1715, one of the first commissioners of "ye Towne on Queen Anne's creek" (now Edenton), and as a member of the original vestry of St. Paul's Church. The present site of Strawberry Hill was part of a 60 acre tract near "Mattacomack Creek" (now Queen Anne's Creek) that was apparently granted by the Lords Proprietors to Crisp in the late seventeenth century. Crisp undoubtedly cleared and cultivated much of the 60 acres, and he apparently built a commodious dwelling on the tract, which was probably located near the creek and "dock landing" mentioned in later deeds. Accessible to navigable waters, the Crisp plantation was typical of many of the early eighteenth century plantations established in Chowan, and tobacco was undoubtedly the cash crop. The close proximity of the plantation to Edenton also increased its value, as the latter became one of the most important towns and ports in colonial North Carolina.

Following the death of Nicholas Crisp in 1726, the tract was owned and apparently occupied by several of his descendants for a period of forty years. In 1765 George Durant Corpew, a great-grandson of Nicholas Crisp, sold the 60 acre tract for £60 Virginia currency to his neighbor William Hoskins whose plantation adjoined it on the east. £60 Virginia money was a rather high price for the tract, and it certainly indicates improved land. In 1780 William Hoskins's son John sold the "old Crisp place" plus an additional 50 acres to Edenton merchant Charles Johnson for £2,500 North Carolina currency. Despite its outward
appearance as quite a large sum (£2,500), the Revolutionary War-inflated North Carolina currency paid by Johnson for 90 acres in 1780 is not much of an increase in actual value over the £60 Virginia money paid for the 60 acres in 1765; indeed, considering how severe inflation was in Revolutionary North Carolina along with the extra acreage involved in the 1780 transaction, £2,500 North Carolina money might actually represent a decline in the value of the property. The fact that Hoskins referred to it as the "ould Crisp place" and not his own seems to indicate that he was not occupying the tract at the time of its sale to Johnson. This scant information may suggest that the original Nicholas Crisp dwelling was either in a state of disrepair, or had been taken down (or fell victim to fire) since 1765.

Charles Johnson (d. 1802) was a native of Scotland and a member of the Scottish clan which included North Carolina governors Gabriel and Samuel Johnston. As a young man, Johnston was a supporter of the Scottish rebellion under Charles Edward, and he emigrated to North Carolina like many of his clansman following " Bonnie Prince Charlie's" defeat at the Battle of Culloden Moor in 1746.11 Johnston settled at Edenton and established a successful mercantile business in the prosperous years prior to the American Revolution. From 1780 to 1792, Johnston served eight terms as a member of the state senate, including one term as speaker of the senate in 1789, and he strongly urged the state to financially reward merchants who were importing arms and munitions for the patriot cause.12 During this period, Johnston was apparently interested only in service to his state, as he declined nominations to both the Continental Congress and the House of Representatives.13 A staunch Federalist and close friend of James Iredell, Johnston did, however, play a leading role in getting North Carolina to ratify the constitution, presiding as vice-president for the first three days of the Fayetteville convention in 1789. For his efforts, Johnston was among those nominated for governor that year, losing in the election to Alexander Martin of Guilford County.14 One year prior to his death, Johnston was elected to the United States House of Representatives, culminating a distinguished political career.15

The exact construction date of the original portion of Strawberry Hill could not be documented from the surviving sources; however, circumstantial evidence seems to suggest that it was built about the time of Johnson's marriage to Elizabeth Earl in 1785, or soon afterward; the actual name "Strawberry-Hill" first appears on the letterheads of Johnston's surviving correspondence in 1788, and the late Georgian details of this portion of the house also date it to the late 1780s.16 From this scant information, it seems safe to surmise that it was constructed ca. 1785-1788. Johnston and his family were certainly living there by 1790, as the first census recorded him as a resident "below Edenton," the vicinity of Strawberry Hill, and his correspondence for that year was also dated from "Strawberry-Hill."17 The name may recall Horace Walpole's estate Strawberry Hill. Johnston had previously added 50 acres to the plantation in
in 1783, and the 1790 census listed Johnston as the owner of 35 slaves, indicating extensive cultivation of Strawberry Hill's 140 acres. Following the death of his wife Elizabeth in the mid 1790s, Johnston sold Strawberry Hill to Colonel John Hamilton in 1797 for £1,999 North Carolina currency. Johnston did retain access to the old family burying ground, "Pine Mount," however, which suggest that his wife may have been buried there. In the summer of 1802, Johnston died "from a long series of ill-health" at "old Bandon," the plantation of his in-laws which he had inherited by right of his wife.

During the nineteenth century, Strawberry Hill changed hands at least fourteen times, making it extremely difficult to determine who was responsible for enlarging and remodeling the structure. In the first four decades of the nineteenth century, the plantation's fields were heavily cultivated by slave labor: the 1800 census listed its owner John Hamilton as master of 37 slaves; the 1810 census listed a new owner Solomon Elliott as master of 12 slaves; and the 1840 census recorded a later owner Joseph F. Faribault as master of 28 slaves. The estate inventories of Elliott and Faribault, who both died while residing at Strawberry Hill, reveal that the dwelling was often lavishly furnished, reflecting the grand life of a wealthy planter. Included in these two inventories were large quantities of walnut, oak, and mahogany furniture, carpets, much silver, and dozens of wineglasses, tumblers, and accompanying decanters. In fact, Faribault's estate was greatly indebted because of personal mismanagement caused by, in the words of one court plaintiff, Faribault's "constant use of ardent liquors."

At the time of the 1850 census, Strawberry Hill was owned by Mrs. Emily Creecy Harvey, widow of Thomas Harvey of Pasquotank County. The census recorded Mrs. Harvey and her four daughters as residing in the mansion, and the plantation was valued at $3,000. Mrs. Harvey was recorded as the owner of 10 slaves, and the agricultural schedule listed 100 acres as of improved quality, producing Indian corn as the primary crop. Both the cash value of the plantation and the agricultural production figures, however, were rather low when compared to similar sized plantations in the Chowan region, indicating perhaps that the plantation's fields were suffering from soil exhaustion due to the long years of cultivation. Mrs. Harvey sold the plantation for $1,800 in 1853, and Strawberry Hill was owned at the time of the 1860 census by one William McCoy. The census recorded McCoy (age 59), his family of six, and two teenage farm laborers as residing under Strawberry Hill's roof. McCoy owned only 3 slaves; nevertheless, McCoy increased the agricultural yield of Strawberry Hill substantially. The plantation was valued at $8,250, and it now consisted of 180 improved acres. Indian corn was still the primary crop, and its yield increased from 500 bushels in 1850 to 2,250 bushels under McCoy's management. The plantation was sold again in 1863, however, and the close of the Civil War ended the way of life it now symbolizes.

Strawberry Hill continued to change hands often in the turbulent years of reconstruction, and portions of the plantation were undoubtedly rented out to
From 1878 to 1936, however, Strawberry Hill was owned and farmed by the family and descendants of Augustus A. Perry. In 1936 Mrs. Madeline Perry Norman and Mrs. Lillian Perry Turnage, granddaughters of Augustus A. Perry, sold Strawberry Hill to Mr. A. C. Boyce, whose family has refurbished the handsome structure and kept it in a state of good repair (though they have disposed of its original farm acreage).
Author's interview with Drucilla Haley, survey specialist, Survey and Planning Branch, Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section, Raleigh, January 23, 1980.


A record of this grant was not found; however, later deed records refer to the tract as that "granted" to Crisp. See Chowan County Deeds, Book M-1, p. 188; Book 0-2, p. 52; microfilm copy, State Archives, hereinafter cited as Chowan County Deeds.

Chowan County Deeds, Book M-1, p. 188; Book 0-2, p. 52.


See Nicholas Crisp's will in J. Bryan Grimes, ed., North Carolina Wills and Inventories (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, 1912), 147-144. For a detailed examination of the Crisp relations associated with the Strawberry Hill Tract, see Moore, Strawberry Hill, 1-3.

Chowan County Deeds, Book M-1, p. 188.

Chowan County Deeds, Book R-2, p. 268.


15 Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1190.


18 First Census, 1790, p. 18. Johnson held other lands in the area also.

19 Chowan County Deed Book U-1, p. 342. Although not as large as the inflated £2,500 which Johnson paid for the tract in 1780, the £1,999 he received in 1797 was of more actual value due to the somewhat stabilization of North Carolina's currency in the early 1790s.

20 Chowan County Deeds, Book U-1, p. 342 "Pine Mount" suffered the fate of many such family burying grounds when later owners plowed it over. It may have lasted as late as 1867 (see Deed Book R-3, p. 320), but was destroyed by 1901, when a plow turned up the Tombstone of Dr. Benjamin Baptist, a distant relation of Nicholas Crisp's family. See Hathaway, NCHR, Vol. II, 470.

21 Chowan County Wills (Original). State Archives; Raleigh Register, August 17, 1302.
Strawberry Hill's recorded owners were: Colonel John Hamilton (1797-1808); Solomon Elliott (1808-1817); Malachi Haughton (1817); John Leary (1817); Thomas and Richard Brownrigg (1817-?); Thomas Chaelton (?-1830); Joseph Fairbault (1830-1841); George W. B. Saterfield (1841-1847); Mrs. Emily Greecy Harvey (1847-1853); Joseph Mardre (1853-1858); William McCoy (1858-1863); Hezekiah Revel (1863-1867); Mills Roberts (1867-?); Watson and Artemesia White (?-1875); James A. Perry (1875-1878); and Augustus A. Perry (1878-1936). See Moore, "Strawberry Hill," 5-7.

22 Second Census, 1800: Chowan County, North Carolina, 117; Third Census, 1810; Chowan County, North Carolina, 539; Sixth Census: 1840, Chowan County, North Carolina, 210, microfilm copies, State Archives. Both Hamilton and Fairbault owned other lands in the area as well.

23 Chowan County Estates Papers, Solomon Elliott and Joseph F. Fairbault folders, State Archives.


25 Seventh Census, 1850: Chowan County, North Carolina, Slave Schedule, 179; Agricultural Schedule, 759. Other agricultural figures for Strawberry Hill in 1850 were: 2 horses; 2 asses; 2 milk cows; 2 oxen; 6 cattle; 20 swine; value of livestock--$400; 500 bushels Indian corn; 20 bushels of oats; 1 bale of cotton (400 lbs.); 50 bushels peas and beans; 50 bushels of sweet potatoes; 10 lbs. of butter produced; 5 tons of hay; value of livestock slaughtered during the year--$75.


27 Eighth Census, 1860: Chowan County, North Carolina, Population Schedule; Slave Schedule; Agricultural Schedule. Other agricultural figures for Strawberry Hill in 1860 were: 2 horses, 3 asses; 3 milk cows, 3 oxen; 4 cattle; 60 swine; value of livestock--$720; 2,250 bushels of Indian corn; 100 bushels of oats; 200 bushels of peas and beans; 50 bushels of Irish potatoes; 150 bushels of sweet potatoes; 100 lbs of butter produced; 9 tons of hay; value of livestock slaughtered during the year--430.


30 Chowan County Deeds, Book W, 125; Book B-2, p. 393; Book R-4, p. 472.

31 Chowan County Deeds, Book 1, p. 368.
Contemporary Newspapers

Raleigh Register
State Gazette of North Carolina (Edenton)

Printed Primary Sources


Secondary Sources


Special Studies

8. Significance

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Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Strawberry Hill is a handsome and well-preserved plantation house of a regionally important type. A portion of the house was built in the late eighteenth century for Charles Johnson, a prominent Chowan County politician. The original dwelling has been enlarged and stands today as an impressive two-story structure with a two-tier porch and a double pile center hall plan. Once a typical side-hall plan structure with Federal detailing, the house retains the notable features of this period, particularly in the stair hall with its richly treated elliptical transverse arch. The dwelling was enlarged to its present size later in the nineteenth century, creating an imposing house with distinctive double engaged porch form typical of the coastal Carolinas. Strawberry Hill stands as a notable reminder of the economic growth and stylistic development of the Albemarle plantation society.

Criteria Assessment:

A. Representative of northeastern North Carolina's antebellum, agricultural economy which was based on a large-scale plantation society in the Albemarle region.

B. Associated with Charles Johnson who was prominent in Chowan County and North Carolina politics. He served in the state Senate in 1781 and was elected to Congress three years later. In 1789 he was a member of the N.C. Council of State and also Speaker of the Senate. By 1790, Johnson was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.

C. Strawberry Hill is a distinctive example of an Albemarle plantation house which has evolved through three major stylistic developments--Late Georgian, Federal, and Victorian. The features of each period remain virtually unaltered and represent a high level of craftsmanship.

D. The site is believed to contain information about antebellum plantation life.
9. Major Bibliographical References

State Archives, Raleigh

Charles E. Johnson Collection

Chowan County Records

Federal Census Records

Survey and Planning Branch Files

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property: 3 1/2 acres, more or less

Quadrangle name: Edenton

Quadrangle scale: 1:62500

Verbal boundary description and justification:

Strawberry Hill is bounded on the North by Church Street extension, and on the East, South, and West by farmlands. This includes all the original plantation property still associated with the house.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Architectural Description by Mary A. Hinson, Survey Specialist

Name/Title: Historical Statement by Elizabeth Moore, Chowan County historian

Organization: Archaeology and Historic Preservation

State: North Carolina

Date: November, 1979

Telephone: 733-6545

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature: [Signature]

Title: State Historic Preservation Officer

Date: January 10, 1980

For HCRS use only:

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

Chief of Registration