United States Department of the Interior
National Park 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 Sandy Point

and/or common

2. Location

street & number E side of SR 1118, 0.8 mi. S of jct. with SR 1114 __ not for publication

city, town __ vicinity of Edenton

state North Carolina code 037 county Chowan code 041

3. Classification

Category Ownership Status Present Use
___ district ___ public x occupied ___ agriculture
x building(s) ___ private ___ unoccupied ___ commercial
___ structure ___ both ___ work in progress ___ educational
___ site Public Acquisition Accessible Present Use
___ in process ___ yes: restricted ___ entertainment
___ object ___ being considered ___ yes: unrestricted ___ government
___ object N/A ___ no ___ industrial ___ military

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. Fred P. Wood, Jr.

street & number 1905 Banbury Road
city, town Raleigh __ vicinity of state North Carolina 27607

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Chowan County Courthouse
city, town Edenton state North Carolina 27932

5. Location of Legal Description

title

date

has this property been determined eligible? __ yes x no

depository for survey records

city, town state

new owner: M/M Harvey Jones (Sarah S.)
1917 Rock Creek Lane
Cary NC 27511

tele: (919) 782-0905

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None

date

has this property been determined eligible? __ yes x no

depository for survey records

city, town state
Sandy Point is an imposing weatherboarded frame dwelling with a handsome double porch along the main (south) facade. The impact of the house is enhanced by its excellent siting, for it stands isolated on the flat broad expanse of Sandy Point Beach on the Albemarle Sound. North-east of the house is a severely dilapidated one-story kitchen which is covered by a gable roof and sheathed with weatherboarding. Several other small frame dependencies dot the yard to the rear of the house.

The house itself rests on sturdy brick piers and rises to a height of two stories plus an attic. It has a center hall plan two rooms deep, and measures five bays wide and four deep. Originally, however, Sandy Point was constructed as a side-hall plan house, two rooms deep. The older (western two-thirds) section of the house is Federal in style while the later (eastern third) section, as well as the entrance and front elevation porches, are Greek Revival. Four corbel capped brick chimneys serve the house: two exterior end single-shouldered chimneys, laid in Flemish bond, are located on either side of the ridge line along the western elevation; two interior end chimneys are located on either side of the ridge line along the eastern elevation. Along the rear (north) elevation is a recent addition, two and a half bays long and one story high, which is capped by a hip roof and divided into a pantry and a screened-in porch.

The house is covered by a gable roof and the side elevations present the striking contours characteristic of many plantation dwellings in the Albemarle Sound vicinity. The roof has two planes of slope: it drops in an acute angle from the apex to either end chimney and then shifts to a shallow shed roof protecting the two-tiered full-length porch along the front elevation. Both levels are flush sheathed and decorated with dignity and restraint. Chamfered square-in-section posts support the first level of the porch. The upper level is similarly supported, although the posts are slightly tapered and each features simple torus neck molding with an echinus beneath a broad abacus. Connecting the upper posts is a balustrade composed of a square-in-section handrail and slender rectangular square-in-section balusters. Above the upper gallery runs a molded dentil cornice which returns slightly at either gable end. Both gable ends are trimmed by two-part molded rakeboards. Cornerposts are in the form of rather large engaged columns at both corners of the main facade, while, at the rear corners, they are two-part molded ovolo strips with no caps.

The central entrance of the main facade is similar to that found at nearby Albania. The door, consisting of a single leaf with five horizontal raised panels, surmounted by a seven-light transom, is flanked by four-pane sidelights resting on raised paneled plinths. The architrave is particularly handsome and reflects the influence of the highly popular Asher Benjamin pattern books. Pairs of reeded pilasters surround the sidelights and the transom. The cornerblocks are ornamented with reeded frets, as is the raised center panel of the lintel which crowns the transom.

The second level contains two doors, one located at the second bay from the western corner, set in a molded surround and topped with a three-light transom, and one in the center bay, of plainer design. Between the central entrance and the next bay to the east is a pronounced break in the flush sheathing which acts as a line of demarcation between the early and late sections of the house.
The interior trim also clearly reveals the differing construction dates between the sections of the house. The center stair hall contains a dentil cornice, a molded chair rail, featuring cyma reversa, bead, and cavetto molding, a similarly treated baseboard, and a wainscot of flat beaded panels. The front west room is identically trimmed and the rear west room has been remodeled. All doors and windows on the first floor west side are framed by three-part molded surrounds. The interior doors have six flat panels, and many HL hinges with their leather washers remain intact. Doors leading to the rear porch and to the pantry have six raised panels each and are of recent date.

The first floor east side contains plain beaded baseboards and symmetrically molded door and window surrounds with square cornerblocks. The window surrounds descend to the baseboard framing molded raised paneled aprons. The single leaf doors on this side of the house contain four raised panels each. A huge folding double door, with eight raised panels per leaf, connects the front and rear eastern rooms on the first floor.

Mantels are likewise indicative of the differences between the two sections of the house. The mantel in the first floor western front room is a handsome academic Federal composition. It features a three-part molded surround, pilasters, a frieze with raised endblocks, and a dentil cornice beneath the mantel shelf. The lower half of each pilaster is flat paneled with a pinched base, while the upper half is decorated with fluting and bead-and-reel moldings. An elegant oval sunburst appears in low relief on each endblock as well as on the center of the frieze. A band of cable molding underlines the dentil cornice.

A large transitional late Georgian mantel is located in the adjacent kitchen. It has a molded surround and heavily molded mantel shelf from which spring fluted pilasters reaching to the pierced dentil cornice at ceiling level. The pilasters frame three tall narrow rectangular raised panels.

The mantel in the first floor eastern front room is a tripartite Federal composition with profuse, tight molding, two-part plain board surround with reeded pilasters, raised paneled endblocks, and a raised reeded center block. The frieze is heavily reeded and above it is a band of broad moldings including cavetto, bead, and exaggerated cyma moldings. The room directly behind this contains an identically treated mantel.

The stair, located at the northern end of the first floor center hall, is a half-turn stair with winders and an intervening landing. It rises front-to-back in its first and longest flight. The simple square-in-section rectangular newel is connected to a molded handrail which is supported by square-in-section rectangular balusters arranged in patterns of two or three to each tread. The open string is ornamented with wave molded brackets; the spandrel is outlined with simple two-part molded stringer, and each tread is fashioned with a bull-nose edge above a band of nosing. The flat paneled soffit and two-part molded fascia of the landing contribute to the effective finish of the stairs.
The wainscot of the hall continues up the stairs to the second floor. Trim on the second floor is, in general, consistent with that found below, but it is plainer and less highly finished. The mantels on the western side of the second floor are identical. Each features a molded surround with a flat paneled frieze and a heavily molded mantel shelf. Those on the eastern side are also identical. Each is a tripartite composition containing symmetrically molded pilasters above which are raised blind endblocks and a similar broad center block; connecting each endblock to the center panel is a single blank horizontal raised panel. The cornice is heavily molded.

The stair to the attic, while closely resembling the principal stair, is a straight run with an unornamented open string. It is located along the west wall of the upper hall and rises front-to-back.
8. Significance

From its vantage point overlooking the Albemarle Sound, Sandy Point stands as an imposing two-and-a-half-story plantation house with a double-tier porch which is characteristic of the Albemarle region. Probably built ca. 1810 by James Sutton as a side-hall-plan dwelling, Sandy Point was later enlarged into a center-hall dwelling with stylish Greek Revival details by Thomas Benbury, Jr., a member of one of the area's oldest and most influential families. The successive construction dates result in an interesting stylistic mixture of late Georgian, Federal, and Greek Revival details. Sandy Point is indicative of the fine dwellings that planters, who had derived considerable wealth from a large plantation economy, constructed and maintained in coastal North Carolina during the first half of the nineteenth century.

Criteria Assessment:

A. Associated with the development in the Albemarle region of North Carolina of a significant antebellum plantation society and its decline following the Civil War.

B. Associated with Thomas Benbury, Jr., an important antebellum planter in Chowan County and a member of one of the county's oldest and most influential families.

C. Representative of the large plantation houses built during the first half of the nineteenth century in the agriculturally rich Albemarle Sound region and displays a mixture of Georgian, Federal, and Greek Revival details in a form which relates it to other major plantations in the area: Land's End, Cove Grove, and Athol.

D. Still the seat of a large farm, Sandy Point is likely to yield information about plantation life during the nineteenth century.
In November, 1793, James Sutton purchased 360 acres of land in Chowan County from Thomas Seaman, a merchant and clock maker. It was on this property sometime in the first two decades of the nineteenth century that Sutton apparently built the dwelling now known as the Sandy Point Plantation House. Although it is not certain that Sutton built the house, he is most likely the builder since he owned until 1824 the plot on which the structure stands.¹

A plantation called Sandy Point was in existence in Chowan County as early as 1684 when it appears on the Hack Map.² In the early eighteenth century the land was once owned by Thomas Pollock who served as governor of North Carolina from 1712 to 1714. Pollock acquired the land as a result of his marriage to his second wife Esther Wilkinson, the widow of Colonel William Wilkinson (sometimes spelled Wilkison) who had been the original owner of the property. In the 1680s-1690s Colonel Wilkinson served as a member of the colonial council, the colonial assembly, and as speaker of the latter body. He was also attorney general for the colony. Following Pollock's ownership the plantation had a number of wealthy owners until Thomas Seaman sold it to James Sutton.³ For this reason the land may have had early eighteenth century buildings, but no such structures are visible today. There is no evidence that either Wilkinson or Pollock ever lived on the site.

James Sutton was a prosperous farmer and slave owner who increased his holdings at Sandy Point to at least 600 acres. He served as register of deeds in the county in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. In 1824 he sold the plantation to Thomas Benbury, Jr.⁴ Sutton died intestate two years later.⁵

Thomas Benbury, Jr., was a member of one of Chowan County's oldest and most influential families. His father Thomas Benbury, Sr., served in the North Carolina colonial assembly, in the state's provincial congresses, and as an American brigadier general in the American Revolution. After the war he was in the general assembly from 1777 to 1782 and was twice elected speaker of the house. He also held the federal position of collector of the port of Edenton. He died in 1793.⁶

When Thomas Benbury, Jr., acquired the Sandy Point land he added it to his already vast holdings in the area. In the 1830s-1840s he made a number of sophisticated renovations to the plantation house which might be expected of a man of considerable wealth.⁷ The census of 1850 records him as owning $40,000 worth of real estate in Chowan County. These holdings consisted of three plantations including Sandy Point, and they collectively amounted to 1,445 acres. Benbury owned 111 slaves who produced 1,100 bushels of wheat, 7,550 bushels of corn, and $2,800 worth of livestock in 1850.⁸ He also operated two fisheries, one of which was at Sandy Point, and they brought him a sizable income. In his will of 1857 he left Sandy Point to his son Lemuel C. Benbury who continued to run the plantation valued at $25,000 in 1860. The younger Benbury had a personal estate valued at $17,000 in that year.⁹

At the outbreak of the Civil War he immediately joined the Confederate Army and was appointed a second lieutenant in Company A, First Regiment of North Carolina Troops.
He saw service in Virginia and was promoted to first lieutenant. He submitted his resignation in the fall of 1862 in order to serve in the state legislature under the Confederate regime.\textsuperscript{10} The war brought hardship to him and Sandy Point. By 1870 the value of his real estate had declined to $5,000 and his personal estate to $1,500.\textsuperscript{11} He experienced further financial troubles in the aftermath of the war, and after his death in 1872 Sandy Point was involved in legal litigations which resulted in its loss by his widow Elizabeth Kimberly Benbury.\textsuperscript{12} The estate was entangled in further negotiations until 1880 when it passed to Herbert Page, a grandson of Josiah Collins, wealthy statesman, land speculator, and philanthropist who owned Somerset Plantation in Washington County (now a state historic site).\textsuperscript{13}

Page attempted to farm the land and run a fishery; but he too fell victim to financial difficulties and mortgaged the plantation in 1889. Three years later Henry G. Wood bought the property, and it has remained in his family's hands.\textsuperscript{14} The present owner is Fred P. Wood, Jr., of Raleigh.

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.
1Chowan County Deed Books (microfilm), Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina Deed Book F-2, p. 375, hereinafter cited as Chowan Deed Books. Elizabeth Vann Moore of Edenton has compiled a chain of title for Sandy Point from which much of this significance has been drawn.


5Chowan County Estates Records, James Sutton, 1826, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina, hereinafter cited as Chowan Estates.

6Ashe and others (eds.), Biographical History of North Carolina, I, 154-156.

7Telephone interview of Joe Mobley with Drew Haley, architectural historian, October 6, 1980.

8Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Chowan County, North Carolina, Population Schedule, 248; Slave Schedule, 321; Agricultural Schedule, 381.

9Chowan County Original Wills, Thomas Benbury, 1857, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina; Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: Chowan County, North Carolina, Population Schedule, 632.


12Chowan Estates, Lemuel C. Benbury, 1876; Chowan Deed Books, R-3, pp. 180, 232; U-2, p. 244; S-3, p. 392; T-2, pp. 73, 307, 309, 572, 616; V-2, pp. 443, 447.
Sandy Point


Moore, Elizabeth Vann. "Sandy Point," an unpublished manuscript at Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.


Telephone interview of Joe Mobley, researcher, with Drew Haley, architectural historian, October 6, 1980.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property ____________________________
Quadrangle name Edenton, N.C. (1981) Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

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Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

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11. Form Prepared By

Architectural Description: Mary Alice Hinson and Drucilla G. Haley
Statement of Significance: Elizabeth Vann Moore and Joe A. Mobley

organization Eastern Office
Division of Archives and History date December 1, 1984

street & number 117 W. 5th Street telephone (919) 752-7778
city or town Greenville state North Carolina 27834

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

   ___ national    ___ state    X 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

date

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration
Sandy Point - Snow Hill Farm
Chowan County, N.C.
detail of survey map by
Carlyle C. Webb, 28 July 1981
scale: 1'' = 400'

TRACT 1-B
108.94 AC.

TRACT 1-C
5388 AC

TRACT 2-A
7256 AC.

TRACT 2-B
8515 AC.

detail of survey map by
Carlyle C. Webb, 28 July 1981
scale: 1'' = 400'