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 Dr. Earl S. Sloan House

and or common

2. Location

street & number 3701 Country Club Road

city, town Trent Woods vicinity of

state North Carolina code 037 county Craven code 049

3. Classification

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<th>Status</th>
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<tr>
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N/A

4. Owner of Property

name Frank R. Holding

street & number P. O. Box 2507

city, town New Bern vicinity of state N. C. 28560

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds, Craven County Courthouse

street & number 302 Broad St.

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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date 1980-1981

depository for survey records Survey & Planning Branch, N.C. Div. of Archives & History

city, town Raleigh state N. C.
The Dr. Earl S. Sloan House is located on a wooded site on the north bank of the Trent River in suburban Trent Woods, Craven County, North Carolina. The two and a half-story brick building has a main block and flanking pavilions under low, hipped slate roofs. Though altered in the interior in several areas for use as a dinner club, it is substantially intact and is undergoing a careful restoration.

Additional Information

The Dr. Earl S. Sloan House sits on a slight rise about 75 yards from the banks of the Trent River. Around the house are mature stands of longleaf pines, covering a site that slopes back from the house to Country Club Road, several hundred feet away. The long axis of the house runs parallel to the river, presenting a broad face to the south. There is a caretaker's house approximately one hundred feet to the northwest, but the larger house dominates the site.

Two and a half stories high, the main block of the house is rectangular, with smaller, flanking, rectangular two and a half-story pavilions that project slightly toward the south, making the overall plan a U. Interrupting the symmetry of this design is the one-story kitchen wing located in the northeast corner. The south elevations of the pavilions have one-story shallow, rectangular bays with flat roofs, and there is a flat-roofed, square porte-cochere centered on the north elevation.

The main entrance to the house is located on the north elevation under the porte-cochere. This large, glazed door with sidelights is flanked by built-in wooden benches.

Although the main entrance to the house is on the north, the south, or river elevation is clearly the principal one. There the tightly-symmetrical U opens up to the river, an effect enhanced by the three segmentally-arched bays with French doors that open into the solarium, and by the triple sets of casement windows that front each pavilion. Also along the south elevation is a raised, tile-floored terrace that breaks forward before the pavilions into semi-octagonal bays. These bays have brick walls with inset pierced limestone panels.

Dark red and black tapestry brick, laid in Flemish bond, covers the exterior of the building. A soldier brick course defines the base of the house and a corbelled rowlock course, about three-fifths of the way up the wall, divides the first floor from the second. Grey granite is used for wall copings. Strips of attached wooden pergola run along the tops of the pavilion bays and between the pavilions on the first floor, south elevation. Located on the east and west elevations of the main and pavilion blocks, the house's four chimneys poke through the eaves and have battered, capless stacks.
Low and hipped, the house's roofs are covered with grey slate. The eaves are deep, with wooden brackets, and contain built-in copper gutters. On the north elevation are three small, hipped-roofed dormers with slate-shingled sides. These dormers each have a pair of small casement windows. On the south elevation are five more dormers, three centered on the main roof and one atop each pavilion.

Fenestration is an important and varied element of the exterior design. Most of the ground floor windows have multi-paned casement or fixed sash, while the second floor windows are largely double-hung, with multi-paned upper sash and single-paned lower ones. On the north and south elevations, windows are combined in strips of three, providing large areas of glass.

**Interior**

On the interior, the house is finished with chestnut trim, painted or natural, with mahogany-varnished hardwood veneer doors. Throughout the building are notable Mission style and classical light fixtures of various types. Atypical for North Carolina in the period, there is a central vacuum system and a fire control standpipe.

The first floor interior is arranged around the parallel solarium and corridor that run the length of the main block between the pavilions. About three times as long as it is broad, the solarium has three sets of opposing French doors on its long walls, with French doors at the ends opening into the dining and living rooms. The walls are finished with rough plastered trimmed with large and small bands of polychrome glazed tile that divide the wall and ceiling surfaces into panels. The door reveals are also tiled.

Behind the solarium, the narrow, high-ceilinged corridor is finished with Colonial Revival panelled wainscot and plaster crown moldings. Basket-arched openings separate the corridor from the perpendicular two-story vestibule and stair hall at the north center. The free-standing stair rises in a central flight from the south to a landing between floors, then doglegs in double flights to a U-shaped second floor landing. Woodwork in this area continues the Colonial Revival theme, including S-shaped string brackets and a Colonial Revival style built-in bench at the head of the main flight.

Most formal of the interior spaces is the dining room in the east pavillion. Natural-finished panelled wainscot in a low-relief Federal mode circles the room. At the north end are glass-fronted built-in cabinets, and at the south a large window seat fills the bay. The ceiling has exposed, panelled beams and cross beams. The mantel is tri-partite Federal in style.

In the west pavillion is the living room. Finished like the dining room, minus the built-in cabinets and with painted woodwork, it has a Tudor-arched mantel and Tudor style over mantel panelling.
The north sides of the main block contain a small study and a small dining room on opposite sides of the stair hall, and small toilets that adjoin them. Originally, a secondary stair ran to the upper floors next to the small dining room, but this was removed in the 1950s to make space for a bar. The stair is being reconstructed. A small elevator to the west of the stair has also been removed.

Most of the interior of the large kitchen at the northeast corner of the building has been gutted. Only the bright yellow glazed tile wainscot survives.

On the second floor, suites of rooms on either side of the stair hall are divided off by French doors. Opening directly onto the stair hall, and located over the solarium, is a simply-finished bedroom. An interesting feature of this room, and the one to the east, is the sink located in the closet.

At the west end, second floor level of the pavillion is Dr. Sloan's bedroom. Although large, the room is relatively plain. The low ceiling has intersecting double beams, and the walls are smooth plaster with a small picture molding. Along the south wall is a built-in window seat, and along the west wall is a large range of built-in cabinets and drawers. The mantel is a plain, classical one. A small sitting room opens off of the bedroom, as does the long, narrow master bath. Both this bath, and a similar one at the east end of the house, have a high wainscot of polychrome glazed tile, as well as polychrome glazed tile floors. At the north side of the house, off of the same subsidiary hall, is another, still more plainly-finished bedroom.

At the east end of the second floor is another large bedroom with a double-beamed ceiling and window seat. However, this room has a closet instead of built-in cabinets, and a mantel with a cusped frieze. Next to this room, over the solarium, is an unassuming bedroom, and across the hall from it to the north is a similar room.

The upper floor of the building, reached by the secondary stair, has a central hall with servants' quarters and storage rooms located off of it. The full basement is unfinished brick and concrete, with boiler rooms and the remains of a 1950s fallout shelter.
8. Significance

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Specific dates: 1914

Builder/Architect: Robert F. Smallwood

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Built in 1914, the Dr. Earl S. Sloan House on the Trent River outside New Bern, North Carolina, is a handsome and well-crafted example of the types of resort architecture designed and erected principally for wealthy northern capitalists in three main regions of North Carolina—mountains, coastal plain and central sandhills—in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It is a large and well-appointed example of Colonial Revival residential construction with Mediterranean and Tudor Revival influences, designed by New Bern native and architect Robert F. Smallwood, whose main practice was in New York City, although he executed several important commissions in the New Bern area. It is also one of the more substantial residences erected in eastern North Carolina during the first two decades of the 20th century, a period of relatively slow growth in many parts of the region after earlier prosperity.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT:

A. The Dr. Earl S. Sloan House is associated with the late 19th and early 20th century practice of wealthy northerners building substantial residences in North Carolina for use as second homes, both summer and winter.

B. Is associated with the productive life of architect and New Bern native Robert F. Smallwood (1886-1965), whose principal architectural practice was in New York City.

C. Is one of the more substantial residences erected in eastern North Carolina during the second decade of the 20th century and is a well-crafted example of a Mediterranean-influenced Colonial Revival house.
The Dr. Earl S. Sloan House, located on the north side of the Trent River approximately two miles southwest of the heart of New Bern, North Carolina, is a large Colonial Revival residence with Mediterranean influences, designed by New Bern native Robert F. Smallwood and built in 1914 as a winter home for Dr. Sloan, originator of Sloan's liniment. As such, it is a distinctive example of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century practice of wealthy and upper middle class northerners who built substantial residences in North Carolina for use as second homes, both winter and summer. Taking advantage of the state's temperate climate, they built in the western mountains, the eastern coastal plain, and the central sandhills region.

As early as the 1850s, northern capitalists had begun vacationing along the coast of North Carolina, organizing shooting clubs for which large and attractive clubhouses were built. One of the earliest of these was the Lighthouse Club of Currituck County, formed in 1874 by several New Yorkers. In 1922, the land owned by the club (by then dissolved), was acquired by Edward Colling Knight, Jr., an executive of the Pennsylvania Railroad, the American Sugar Refinery, and Knight's Publishing Company. On the magnificent site, he constructed the grand Whalehead Club (NR, 1979).1

The best-known of the vacation homes built in North Carolina by wealthy northerners was the chateauesque Biltmore House (NHL), designed by Richard Morris Hunt for George W. Vanderbilt. The estate was developed on a mountaintop outside Asheville, which had become popular as a health and pleasure resort some years previously. Completed in 1895, the palatial residence is also noteworthy for its gardens and park setting, the work of Frederick Law Olmsted.2

Olmsted was also responsible for the design of Pinehurst (NRHD, 1973), a model resort village established in the sandhills region of the state in 1895. James W. Tufts, the Boston inventor of modern soda fountain equipment, commissioned the design, intending "... to found a winter health resort for middle-class northerners with 'delicate lungs.'" Pinehurst was later to become better-known for its fine golf courses, becoming "... one of the most popular golf resorts in the United States."3

In May 1914, the New Bern newspapers, under headlines such as "Boston Millionaire to Locate Here" and "Dr. Sloan Will Have Fine Estate Near New Bern," excitedly informed their readers that Dr. Earl S. Sloan was planning to build a winter home in the New Bern area.4 Attracted to the area by its salubrious climate, Sloan had acquired approximately 440 acres of land along the Trent River in purchases from J. W. and Sarah C. Stewart (two parcels totaling 415 acres) and the Craven County Commissioners (24.9 acres). The Stewart property was known as the Colonel Ransom estate, and Sloan called his plantation Ransom Farm.5 According to one article, Sloan planned "... to erect a mansion and build up an estate which will equal if not surpass the famous Biltmore estate in
In addition, Sloan was quoted as saying, "I am going to become a citizen of Craven County just as soon as I can legally do so, and I shall do everything in my power for this city, this county, and this section." These words surely were morale-boosters in a town which had formerly been one of the largest and most important in the state but was being rapidly eclipsed by the booming towns of the Piedmont. As evidence of this commitment, Sloan hired New Bern native Robert F. Smallwood as his architect and local contractor John F. Rhodes to supervise construction.

Earl Sawyer Sloan was born in 1848 in Zanesfield, Ohio. After studying veterinary medicine (which he never practiced), he moved to Missouri where he went into the horse-trading business with his brother. In the course of his work with horses, he prepared a liniment for used on injured animals, discovering by accident that the potion was also efficacious for relieving similar bruising in humans. The formula for Sloan's Liniment, as it was called, was devised about 1885; it quickly became a popular medicinal item and over the next thirty years made a fortune for Sloan. The popularity of the liniment has been attributed to the theory that "... in devising his Sloan's Liniment formula he had applied a new idea of projecting curative heat without the use of cumbersome mustard plasters, hot water bottles or uncomfortable irritants." In 1913, Sloan sold his company to Wm. R. Warner & Co. (the forerunner of Warner-Lambert Pharmaceutical company).

With the money he had earned through sale of his liniment and later the company which produced it, Sloan was able to engage in a variety of philanthropies and include a number of significant bequests in his will. Among them was the establishment of the Sloan Library in his hometown of Zanesfield, with a posthumous endowment of $250,000. He also remembered New Bern in his will, making bequests to the Public Library and to the Masonic Lodge for the benefit of poor children of its members.

Sloan maintained a sizeable estate in West Roxbury, Massachusetts, but by early 1914, he had apparently decided to build a winter home in a warmer climate, in part because he had been a semi-invalid since an unspecified illness early in the century. Among the places he considered as a location were Texas and Arizona, as well as several resort areas in North and South Carolina, including Pinehurst and Asheville. He decided on New Bern, a town with a felicitous climate where he already had a number of friends among its prominent citizens. It was probably through these connections that he came to hire Robert F. Smallwood as the architect for his southern home.

Robert Fleet Smallwood was born in New Bern in 1886, the son of Samuel W. and Lida Smallwood. He was educated at Davidson College and the University of North Carolina and studied architecture at the Columbia University School of Architecture in New York City, where he had established himself in partnership with William Henry Deacy by 1915. He maintained his ties with New Bern, however, designing the Sloan House
Dr. Earl S. Sloan House

in 1914, an addition for the Craven County Courthouse in 1915 (New Bern NRHD), the William Ward House in 1932, and the United States Post Office and Courthouse in 1934 (New Bern NRHD). His principal practice was in New York, although he also did work in Florida. Smallwood died in Washington, D.C. in 1965. Smallwood’s design for the Sloan House was in the Colonial Revival style popular at the time, with apparent Mediterranean influences, such as in the horizontality of its lines, the deep, bracketed eaves, and the U-shaped plan with rooms opening off a hall running along the base of the U. The most notable feature exhibiting this Mediterranean inspiration is the solarium spanning the river elevation in the U; it is a loggia-like room with arched openings.

The interior of the houses exhibits carefully-crafted cypress and hardwood woodwork in a combination of Colonial Revival and Tudor Revival styles. All of the rooms are handsomely detailed, with beamed ceilings in the principal rooms, a graceful central stair, and a notable use of glazed art tiles, particularly in the bathrooms. Many of the original light fixtures survive. Interior finishes were provided by Warren Cushman of Zanesfield, Ohio, specially brought in for the purpose by Dr. Sloan. Original paint colors in the solarium, recently re-exposed, included aquamarine and peach, typical Mediterranean-influenced colors. An elevator was installed near the main stair for Dr. Sloan’s convenience.

Several auxiliary buildings were erected on the estate, including a brick caretaker's bungalow, a large carriage house and adjacent stable, a boat house, an observation tower, a pump house and a generator building. Of these, only the caretaker's house survives in its original relationship to the main house. The carriage house and stable and the surrounding acreage were sold some years ago, with the carriage house being converted to a residence. Because of uncertainties regarding the future of the caretaker's cottage, only the main house and approximately one acre surrounding it are being nominated.

It is not clear how much time Dr. and Mrs. Sloan (the former, Bertha Parker of Nova Scotia whom he had married in 1899) actually spent at their winter home in New Bern. Dr. Sloan died in 1923, leaving his Craven County property to his widow. Mrs. Sloan sold Ransom-Farm in 1928 to N. E. Mohn and C. T. Hellinger, copartners in the New Bern realty firm of N. E. Mohn and Company. Three years later, Mohn and Hellinger mortgaged the property to Otis F. Glenn of Murphysboro, Illinois, who was serving a term in the United States Senate. In 1933, judgment was made against the partners and the estate passed to Glenn, who renamed it Trent Pines.

Glenn (1879-1959) and his wife intended to make the same use of the estate as the Sloans did—that of a winter home. However, in 1941, they entered into a lease agreement with Frederick A. Miles of Craven County, who operated Trent Pines Club as a private supper club from 1942 to 1948. At that time, he purchased the property from the Glens and hired others to manage the club for him—Gerald Colvin (1948-1955) and William M. Barwick (1955-1965).
Barwick installed a swimming pool between the house and the river about 1957. The only other non-cosmetic changes made to the house during its years as Trent Pines Club were modernization of the kitchen and demolition of part of an enclosed service stair to provide space for a bar.

Robert P. Holding, Jr (1924–1979) of Raleigh purchased the Sloan estate from Miles in 1968. Holding, who was chairman of the board of First Citizens Bank, renamed the estate Miles Away and planned to refurbish the house for use as a second home. However, being advised that this would be a very expensive endeavor, he built a new home on the property, and the Sloan House has remained vacant for much of the last eighteen years. Holding died suddenly in 1979, and the property passed to one of his sons, Frank R. Holding, who is currently undertaking some of the repairs and rehabilitation necessary to return the house to use. At present, a caretaker resides in the house.

Although the Sloan estate in New Bern certainly never achieved the magnitude of a Biltmore, the house is one of the more substantial residences erected in eastern North Carolina during the period. It is a well-crafted example of a more modest but still substantial resort home designed to meet the needs and specifications of its owner while taking advantage of the location's climate and natural attributes.
Footnotes


2 Catherine W. Bishir, Battery Park Hotel, National Register of Historic Places nomination (Raleigh: N. C. Division of Archives and History, 1979).

3 Survey and Planning Unit, Pinehurst Historic District, National Register of Historic Places nomination (Raleigh: N. C. Division of Archives and History, 1973).

4 "Boston Millionaire to Locate Here," New Bern Weekly Journal, 22 May 1914, p. 3; and "Dr. Sloan Will Have Fine Estate Near New Bern," The New Bern Semi-Weekly Sun, 22 May 1914, p. 4.


6 "Dr. Sloan Will Have Fine Estate"; and Earl S. Sloan House Survey File, Survey and Planning Branch, N. C. Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, N. C.

7 "Dr. Sloan Will Have Fine Estate."

8 Sloan House Survey File.


11 The National Cyclopaedia; and Sloan Will.

12 Beckett letter; and The National Cyclopaedia.

13 "Dr. Sloan Will Have Fine Estate."

14 United States Census, 1900, population schedule.

and Sloan House Survey File.

16 "Robert F. Smallwood."


19 "Boston Millionaire"; and Holding interview.

20 The National Cyclopaedia.


23 Holding interview; and Colvin interview.

24 CCRD, deed book 735, p. 121.

25 CCRD, Death Certificates, book 1979, p. 238; Craven County Clerk of Superior Court, Will file and docket 79-E-178; and Holding interview.
10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property: 8

Quadrangle name: New Bern

UTM References

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Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheets

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

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Allison H. Black, Architectural Historian
David R. Black, Architectural Conservator

organization: Black & Black, Preservation Consultants

street & number: 620 Wills Forest Street

date: 1 June 1986

telephone: 919 828-4616

city or town: Raleigh
state: North Carolina
zip code: 27605

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: [Signature]

date: July 10, 1986

For NPS use only

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

date: [Date]

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: [Signature]

date: [Date]

Chief of Registration


Craven County Clerk of Superior Court. Will Records.

Craven County Register of Deeds. Deed Records.


The boundary of the property being nominated is shown as the red line on the accompanying Craven County Tax Map, no. 8-47A, which is drawn at a scale of 100 feet to the inch. The nominated property (approximate location indicated on the map) includes the house and a 175 foot by 200 foot parcel centered on the footprint of the house and terrace.