

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Umstead, Adolphus W., House  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number W side SR 1607 (Copley Rd.) .5 mi. N of SR 1611  not for publication N/A  
city, town Bahama  vicinity  
state N.C. code 037 county Durham code 063 zip code 27503

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>2</u>	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	<u>1</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>2</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

William S. Rain, Jr. 8-7-89  
Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling  
Domestic: secondary structure  

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling  
Domestic: secondary structure  

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)Greek Revival  
Other: vernacular I-house  

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone  
walls weatherboard  

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roof tin  
other wood porches  

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Adolphus W. Umstead House is a largely intact, rectangular, symmetrical, two-story, three-bay wide, single-pile, mid-nineteenth century North Carolina vernacular Greek Revival style I-house with a long one-story offset rear ell and a one-story one-room side wing attached by an enclosed (originally open) breezeway. The gable-roofed, weatherboarded farmhouse faces north and stands in a clearing near the center of a secluded forty-acre wooded tract on the west side of Copley Road (SR 1607), approximately 1.5 miles north of the rural village of Bahama in northeast Durham County. The forty-acre house tract lies near the center of what was, in the late nineteenth century, Adolphus W. Umstead's 300-acre tobacco farm. The farm was subdivided in 1928, but remained in family ownership until the late 1970s. The forty-acre house tract is bounded on the west by Dial Creek, site of a grist mill (destroyed) from the mid-eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries, on the east by Copley Road and at the north and south by woods and farmland. The house is located at the end of a long gravel driveway off Copley Road; when the Umstead House was built c. 1850, it stood hard by the old Oxford-to-Hillsborough Road and traces of this eighteenth century road (long abandoned) are visible in what is now the front yard; it ran east-west between the house and a very large sweet gum tree. Small raised-bed flower gardens, defined by field stone walls, dot the rear yard and climbing vines shade the rear porch. Remnants of earlier landscaping survive, primarily in the spring bulbs which appear along the route of the old road. A newly dug pond is located near the southeast corner of the house.

The Umstead House rests on a mortared fieldstone foundation. The single-shoulder exterior end chimneys which bracket the house's main block have fieldstone bases and offset corbelled brick stacks. A similar stone and brick chimney (rebuilt) serves the one-story west wing; a fourth stone chimney (rebuilt) rises from the center of the rear ell, serving back-to-back fireplaces in the ell's two rooms. Fieldstones are also used for the front

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and rear steps. The main block, west wing and rear ell all have gable roofs sheathed with patterned tin shingles installed about 1930. The eaves are very simply boxed and the soffits are painted a contrasting color, as are the plain corner boards (at present, white weatherboard sheathing and dark blue/green corner boards and soffits). An attached less than full facade hip roof porch (reconstructed) with replacement square posts is located on the main elevation. A matching porch, located on the rear elevation, joins a shed roof porch which runs along the rear ell, creating a spacious L-shaped rear porch. The rear porch floor boards appear to be original. Several original rear porch posts survive as do two pilasters at the extreme ends of the porch; they are slender, graceful chamfered posts with flared tops and applied two-part bands of trim. Replacement rear porch posts (c. 1930?) are rustic peeled pine logs.

The Adolphus W. Umstead House had been vacant for a number of years and was in a deteriorated condition when the present owners, Diane and John Bittikofer purchased it in 1978. The sturdy tin roof had protected the structure and the house had not been seriously vandalized. Most of the important architectural elements were intact, or enough remnants remained to provide patterns for replicating the feature. The new owners have completed an extensive, carefully executed restoration and renovation of the house. During the course of the restoration, the new owners made a surprising discovery: the house encloses an early nineteenth century one-room log house (hewn square logs, notch unknown) now encased within the west (right side) portion of the present two-story I-house form. The present structure was apparently the result of a major mid-nineteenth century expansion and remodeling of the small log house. Exterior evidence of the log house is apparent only in the narrow first story four-over-four sash window set in a deep reveal in the west wall. Elsewhere, the windows are large six-over-six sash. No original window glass survived, but enough muntins survived intact either to be repaired or to provide models for new reproduction sash.

On the main elevation, the double-leaf entrance doors, with recessed panels with applied molded stops and rim locks, are framed by three-light sidelights set atop a recessed panel. This same door composition is repeated on the rear elevation. The doors are further ornamented with embossed sliding bolts at the interior tops and bottoms.

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The two-story main block of the Umstead House follows a center hall plan. The main staircase, with chamfered newel posts and simple tobacco stick style balusters, rises against the east (left) wall. The staircase is ornamented by an applied scalloped face string. The original banister does not survive; it has been replaced with a simple, shaped hand rail. The first floor of the main block contains two rooms, both used as parlors or sitting rooms. The east (left) room is the more formal of the two. It features a plastered ceiling; plastered walls covered with wallpaper, original heart pine floors; four-panel doors; molded, tall baseboards; and handsome hand-planed pine mantel with simple applied pilasters and unusual double arched frieze beneath the plain shelf. The west (right) sitting room, the main room of the earlier log structure, displays wide, hand-planed (painted) pine board walls; exposed hewn rafters (original board ceiling removed by present owners); original window muntins (replacement glass); replacement poplar flooring cut from trees on the property; an original enclosed corner staircase, with a plank door and old lever style handle, which gives access to the sleeping loft of the original log building; a simple mantel with wide, plain board frieze, replacement shelf, rebuilt stone hearth and firebox surround; and tall, molded baseboards. A wide plank door with shaped battens and strap hinges is located in the south (rear) wall of this room; another doorway on the west (right) wall has been filled in with bookshelves.

Access to the enclosed breezeway, the rear ell, and the west wing is via a doorway in the south wall of the west parlor. The enclosed breezeway contains a modern bathroom; it retains a massive chamfered porch post, a decorative structural element supporting the original roof. The unusually long rear ell, originally the kitchen and dining room, provides space for a large modern kitchen with original hand-planed board walls and handsome new pine cabinets, as well as a utility/laundry room at the rear where the old kitchen was located. A new window replaces a door in the east wall of the kitchen and a few fire-damaged ceiling boards in the old kitchen room were replaced. An early, shelved pantry survives in the southwest corner of the ell. A double fireplace, with a massive irregularly shaped stone lintel, serves both ell rooms. According to tradition, the square high-ceilinged one-room west wing originally served as a bedroom; it is presently in use as a study/den. The walls and ceiling are wide hand-planed pine boards. The Greek Revival style door is composed of two

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vertical, recessed panels outlined by applied molding. The mantelpiece for the rebuilt stone fireplace does not survive. New built-in bookshelves flank the fireplace. Large six-over-six sash windows, located opposite each other on the north and south walls light the room.

On the second story of the Umstead house are a spacious, bright hallway (eight-over-eight sash window on rear wall and six-over-six sash window opposite) and two large bedrooms. The east bedroom retains many original features including wide, hand-planed board walls and ceiling; pine floors; and a double-arched mantelpiece similar to that found in the parlor below. Here the arches are more pronounced and extend to a center point, making a "heart" shape. The original plank door to this bedroom is ornamented with nail heads spelling "A.W.U.", Adolphus W. Umstead's initials; on the reverse is Zula Umstead's (Adolphus' daughter) penciled autograph. The spacious west bedroom, the sleeping loft of the log house, does not communicate with the upstairs hall: access is via the enclosed corner staircase from the west parlor. This bedroom, sheathed with wide planed boards retains the original mantel (rebuilt stone firebox and brick hearth); it features a plain board frieze, simple pilasters with applied molding, and a narrow shelf.

According to a 1928 plat map, the Umstead farm originally had several farm outbuildings including a barn, stables, corn crib, four tobacco barns and a tenant dwelling, all located near the main house. Only the stable survives (contributing building) and is now in use for automobile and equipment storage. This substantial, late-nineteenth century, two-story gable front weatherboard building has open rafters and a tin roof which extends to shelter open one-story side storage bays. Both stories of the stable's central core have windows (presently boarded over) which flank door sized openings. The windows and doors are topped by very shallow pointed arches. The stable was in deteriorated condition when the present owners purchased the property. They repaired the tin roof, replaced the rotten floor on the first story and added the right (west) open bay to balance and match the existing left (east) open bay.

An open tin-roofed carport (non-contributing structure) stands immediately in front of and slightly to the right of the stable. It is shielded by shrubs and trees and does not detract from the site.

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The present forty-acre house tract was originally planted with tobacco and other row crops, but has not been farmed for many years. The area immediately surrounding the Umstead House is presently cleared and used for small ornamental flower gardens and a grassy yard; the old fields have reverted to a dense, mixed pine and hardwood forest. The presence of old tobacco rows is still apparent in the slightly uneven terrain of the forest floor.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G    N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Agriculture

Period of Significance

c. 1850-1928

Significant Dates

c. 1850

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Adolphus W. Umstead House is architecturally significant as a good representative example of a mid-nineteenth century piedmont North Carolina vernacular I-house with Greek Revival style details. This once common farmhouse type is now increasingly rare in Durham County as other examples disappear due to abandonment, deterioration and development pressures. The Umstead House is built around a small one-and-one-half story log house (date unknown) and displays a combination of architectural elements and construction techniques locally characteristic of both the earlier log structure and the c. 1850 expansion and remodeling in the Greek Revival style. These features include its two-story, single-pile form with offset rear ell, fieldstone and brick exterior end chimneys, corner boards, sidelighted double-leaf main entrance, center hall plan, pier-and-lintel mantels ornamented by an unusual double-arch motif, wide hand-planed board walls and ceilings, hewn ceiling beams, and an enclosed corner stair (log portion). Pending additional information on the log structure, the period of significance is defined by the house as it substantially appears today (a mid-nineteenth century I-house) and does not encompass the log construction which has been largely concealed. The house and its remaining forty-acre tract, subdivided from Adolphus W. Umstead's 300-acre tobacco farm in 1928, are associated with the Umstead family, locally prominent early area settlers and farmers, and the dwelling is the earliest surviving house associated with the family. The Umstead House was long abandoned and in deteriorated, but relatively intact, condition when purchased in 1978 by the present owners. Today the simple, but handsome, house is an excellent example of a well-executed, sympathetic restoration and renovation.

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### Historical Background and Context:

In the mid-eighteenth century the Umstead family emigrated from Pennsylvania to the North Carolina back country. The Umsteads were one of a very few originally German families to settle in what was then eastern Orange County, since 1881 a part of Durham County. Most of the German pioneers settled in the southern piedmont counties of Rowan, Davidson, Mecklenburg and Cabarrus. Orange County was then one of the fastest growing counties in the colony: between 1747 and 1767 the number of taxable households grew from 20 to 4,000. [Anderson, Chapter 4, pp. 1-3]

The Umsteads settled along the Flat River and its tributary, Dial Creek, about 1.5 miles north of the present village of Bahama; the family holdings would be concentrated here for the next two hundred years. The earliest recorded Umstead land transactions include a 1797 land grant to David Umstead for an 18-acre tract which included a "mill house" on the Flat River near Dial Creek (variously spelled Dyal's or Dial's); in 1798 he was granted an adjacent tract (acreage unknown) also on the Flat River [Grant Book 8, p. 224 and Book 10, p. 190] In 1800 John Umstead (David Umstead's brother?) was granted 112 adjacent acres on the Flat River. [Grant Book 11, p. 103]

Several grist mills were established during the late eighteenth century along the Flat River and its tributaries, including at least two on Dial Creek. One of the mills was built about 1780 by James Vaughan and sold c. 1830 to Nathaniel Harris, one of Bahama's earliest settlers; the other was operated by the Bowling family. Bahama, known originally as Round Hill, grew up around Mt. Bethel United Methodist Church, established about 1780 and located at the crossroads of the Raleigh-to-Roxboro and the Hillsborough-to-Oxford roads. [Bull Durham, p. 79; Anderson, Chapter 4, pp. 29-30] A post office was established at Round Hill by 1832.

On May 8, 1837 Nathaniel Harris sold his mill and its three-acre tract to Carter N. Waller of Granville County. On the same day Harris sold an adjoining 25-acre tract (upstream on both Dial Creek and Flat River) to Squire D. Umstead, Adolphus Umstead's father. It is not known whether Harris or a predecessor had built the small log house which apparently was standing on this tract sold to Umstead for \$100. [Orange County

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Deed Book 27, p. 357] Squire Umstead had married "the girl next door," Carter Waller's daughter Martha, two years earlier in 1835. [Anderson, Chapter 6, p. 28]

By 1850 Squire Umstead (1812-c. 1870) was a well established farmer and a prominent Bahama citizen. He was a member of the Flat River Union Church, and was chosen to read the Declaration of Independence during the community's July 4, 1852 celebration. [Anderson, Chapter 6, p. 13] He owned a 270-acre farm (200 improved acres, 70 in woodland) worth \$2,350. There he grew 1,800 pounds of tobacco, 100 bushels of oats, 200 bushels of corn, and 35 bushels of wheat; his livestock included 42 swine, 11 head of cattle, and 2 horses, collectively valued at \$255. [Orange County Agricultural Census, 1850] Also, sometime about 1850 Umstead established his own mill on Dial Creek just upstream of the old Nathaniel Harris-Carter Waller mill (none of these mills survive). The 1850 Orange County Population Schedules reveal that Squire Umstead and his wife Martha Waller Umstead (then 38 and 33 years old respectively) were parents of eight children (three other children would be born during the following decade) ranging in age from 13 to 5 months, so it is likely that the original small log house had been expanded to the present frame I-house by then. Adolphus Williamson Umstead was their sixth child, born in 1846. Probably the best known of their children would be second son, Alvis K. Umstead (1839-1914), who later was a member of Durham County's first Board of Commissioners (1881) and was quite active in Durham civic and religious affairs.

By 1860 Squire Umstead owned four separate tracts of land totaling 864 acres in Mangum Township (Bahama and Rougemont were the two major villages in the township). The largest tract (presumably his home tract) contained 650 acres where he grew 6,000 pounds of tobacco, 500 bushels of corn and 200 bushels of wheat as well as maintained \$1,800 worth of livestock including a herd of 30 swine. The other tracts, totaling 14 acres, 100 acres and another 100 acres, may have been leased or farmed by other family members since no crops or livestock are recorded in the agricultural census for that year. The 14-acre tract (4 improved, 10 in woodland) had an unusually high value at \$500 and may reflect its commercial use, perhaps as the mill tract. [Orange County Agricultural Census, Mangum Township, 1860] Umstead's tobacco farm was a notably large one. Prior to the Civil War, typical North Carolina and Virginia

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tobacco farms rarely exceeded 300 acres (the vast majority were under 50 acres). Orange County soil was not particularly suitable for growing tobacco; less than 3% of the county's improved land was planted in tobacco, while 33% was planted with corn and 21% with wheat. [Tilley, p. 94]

In the 1870 Orange County Population Schedules, Martha Umstead (then age 52) is listed as the head of her household. (Squire Umstead's death date is not precisely known.) It appears that as her sons married and established households, they were given tracts of land, probably subdivided from Squire Umstead's extensive holdings, although substantiating deeds could not be located. Her sons DeWitt (age 32), Alvis (31), and John (25) all owned tobacco farms of approximately 50 acres, worth between \$300-\$500. Adolphus W. Umstead (age 23) and his new bride Nancy (or Nannie) Bowling Umstead (age 20) were then residing in Martha Umstead's household. [Orange County Population and Agricultural Schedules, 1870]

In February 1871, Adolphus Umstead's wife Nancy received a gift of 100 acres from her parents Betty and William Bowling. William Bowling was a miller and a descendant of the founder of the 18th-century Bowling's mill. Nancy Umstead's land may have included the old mill tract. The deed records that the land was bounded on the east by Dial Creek, along the meanders of the branch which lies at the southern end of the property and included "all the woods, ways, water and water courses and all of the appurtenances thereto belonging. . . [along with] the profits of the aforesaid land and premises." [Orange County Deed Book 40, p. 324] In May 1873 Adolphus Umstead bought an additional, probably adjoining, 82 acres of land from Green Bobbitt and the Orange County Probate Court for \$662. This land also lay along Dial Creek. [Orange County Deed Book 42, p. 27] Adolphus and Nancy Umstead's residence during the 1870s has not been confirmed, but it is presumed they remained with Martha Umstead.

In 1880 Adolphus and Nancy Umstead were residing in the nominated house and farming the land. They lived on the farm with their daughter Zula (age 8) and son Willie L. (age 7). One black farm laborer was also residing on the property. The Agricultural Census for 1880 provides a detailed picture of their farming operation. Adolphus Umstead owned 150 acres (75 acres tilled, 75 in woodland) valued at \$1,000. His farm

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machinery was valued at \$75. Included in his \$300 worth of livestock were 1 horse, 2 mules, 4 head of cattle (which produced 200 pounds of butter), 15 swine, 10 chickens (producers of 120 eggs); 10 sheep had been "killed by dogs" that year and 1 cow had been slaughtered, probably for household consumption. Umstead employed 55 black laborers at a cost of \$100. They sawed 100 cords of wood that year and worked 25 acres of corn which produced 575 bushels, 10 acres of wheat (75 bushels) and grew 8,000 pounds of tobacco on 12 acres.

The 1880 Population Schedules record that Adolphus Umstead's widowed mother headed a household which included her two youngest children Claudine, a tobacco farmer (he grew 4,000 pounds that year), and Hamp, who is listed as a "miller." Adolphus Umstead continued tobacco farming and operated a grist mill (destroyed) with Hamp (and perhaps other relatives) on Dial Creek. On an 1887 map of Durham County "Umpstead's (sic) Mill" is clearly marked; a c. 1910 Durham County Map indicates the mill site as "Umstead Bros." On May 30, 1894 Zula L. Umstead, Adolphus' daughter, married her cousin R.K. Umstead and moved away from her family's homestead. [Durham County Marriage Register, 1881-1906] Her younger brother, Willie, continued living and working on the family tobacco farm and by 1900 his cousin, Luster Bowling, was also living there and working as a "farm laborer." [Population Schedules, 1900] A 1906 Directory of Rural Residents in the Vicinity of Durham and Raleigh lists eleven different Umstead families, including Adolphus W. Umstead's, living along neighboring rural mail routes between Bahama and Rougemont. All of the Umsteads (as well as everyone else on those routes) are listed as "farmers."

On March 29, 1907 Zula and R.K. Umstead sold three tracts of land, totaling 20.5 acres, to Adolphus W. Umstead; these tracts bordered his farm. R.K. Umstead had acquired this land between 1889 and 1893 from Adolphus' neighbors (and possibly relatives by marriage), Lee Mangum and A.R. Copley. [Durham County Deed Book 38, p. 134]

Adolphus W. Umstead died in April 1909 leaving no will. [Durham County Administrators Record Book B, p. 216; recorded April 17, 1909] His son, W.L. Umstead was named the estate's administrator. The estate was valued then at \$250 and his heirs were widow, Nannie, and children, Zula Umstead and W.L. Umstead. On June 5, 1909 Nannie Umstead sold the three tracts Adolphus

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had bought two years prior from his son-in-law, R.K. Umstead, to Ollie Mangum. Nannie Umstead apparently moved into Durham or elsewhere after her husband's death; she does not appear in the 1910 population schedules for Mangum Township.

In February 1920, W.L. Umstead made his final report as administrator of his father's estate. In his report to the Superior Court he states that at the time of his death, Adolphus Umstead had \$350 "cash in banks" and owned a farm consisting of "approximately 400 acres in Mangum Township." As his only son, W.L. Umstead was heir to one-half of the estate and six of Adolphus' nieces and nephews were heirs to the other half. All of these children were minors and W.L. Umstead supported "all of said children until they married or got old enough to support themselves." No property inventory had been taken. [Durham County Estate File #1675]

Zula Umstead apparently inherited the family farm after her brother, W.L. Umstead's death. In turn, Zula's husband R.K. Umstead inherited it after Zula's death (dates unknown; both W.L. and Zula died sometime between 1920 and 1928). R.K. Umstead and his second wife, Mary C. Umstead, executed a quit claim deed on April 28, 1928 to his and Zula's children, Willie Lee Umstead Albright (first child, married to Joseph Albright), Richard B. Umstead, Hugh Umstead, A.W. Umstead, Homer L. Umstead, Nannette Umstead, and Alese Umstead. The property is described in the quitclaim deed as "containing 300 acres, more or less, and being the homeplace of the late A.W. Umstead." [Durham County Deed Book 93, p. 252] It appears that this deed was executed in preparation for a subdivision of the land. The farm was surveyed in May, 1928 and the resulting detailed plat map survives. [Durham County Plat Book 6B, p. 202] The map is unusually informative since it not only delineates the six new subdivided tracts, but also includes a sketched site plan for the major buildings on the 267-acre (by surveyor's count) farm. [See attached copy] The home tract of 92.5 acres is shown as including the A.W. Umstead dwelling and, at the rear of the house, a barn, corn crib, stables, five unidentified outbuildings and four tobacco barns. Also on the tract are two tenant houses, one with a nearby barn and corn crib. A few additional tenant houses and farm outbuildings are scattered around the 267 acres.

The property stayed in the Umstead family until 1978 with Nancy Umstead Poole (Zula's granddaughter) owning the majority

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of the original farm. (It is not known when the property ceased functioning as a tobacco farm. Although evidence of plowed fields still exists in the clearing presently surrounding the Adolphus W. Umstead House, most of the surrounding fields have grown into woodland.) On October 16, 1978 John and Dianne Bittikofer purchased forty acres which contained the then vacant and derelict Adolphus Umstead House from Nancy Umstead Poole and her husband John Rufus Poole. [Deed Book 985, pp.550-551]

The Bittikofers have carefully restored and renovated the Umstead House and rehabilitated the original stables for use as a storage barn. They do not farm the land, but have landscaped the yard surrounding the house with period flower gardens, utilizing native plants where possible.

According to Bahama historian, Mildred Harris, as recently as the early 1950s, about 80% of the residents in Mangum Township were farmers. This northeast corner of Durham County still remains largely rural today, but the majority of its residents commute to Durham or other nearby towns for work. In 1979 a University of North Carolina graduate student studied the rural heritage of the Bahama community and concluded that

Farming still surrounds these people, even though its meaning has changed for them. They talk about their fathers' land as if it will resurrect itself. At home, in their back yards, they say they will plant the seeds to harvest a new generation of crops. Always there is talk about turning the weed-ridden fields once more. Repeatedly I hear words like: 'Next spring I'm going to begin farming again, and start with a garden for just my family.'  
[Bamberger, p. 19]

The rural quality of the land in northern Durham County is threatened by plans for a massive research/manufacturing and upscale housing complex currently under development.

### Architectural Context:

The Adolphus W. Umstead House, a Greek Revival style I-

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house, is representative of a once common, now increasingly rare, mid-nineteenth century North Carolina farmhouse type. The symmetrical two-story I-house was the principal domestic form in the northern piedmont region of the state for over a century, from the early nineteenth century until the first decades of the twentieth century. The basic form of this long-lived, popular vernacular style changed little over the century. It was easy to ornament its plain form with various stylistic treatments popular throughout the era. The Greek Revival style, the most widespread and enduring of the period revival styles, is most often associated with antebellum dwellings, but it persisted for many years after. North Carolina architectural historian Michael Southern wrote in his definitive monograph, "The I-House as a Carrier of Style in Three Counties of the Northeastern Piedmont":

In North Carolina little was built after 1830 that was not at least touched by [the Greek Revival style] influence. . . . Vernacular housing was no exception.

Southern goes on to describe a typical Greek Revival style I-house, a description which fits the Umstead House:

The form of the house almost melts, as it were [in contrast to earlier, taller Georgian and Federal I-houses]; facades become lower and longer, now consistently with symmetrical three-bay divisions. Windows become squarish with larger panes of glass set in six-over-six sash. . . . Weatherboard is plain and sometimes the house is framed with wide corner boards and exterior baseboards. . . . Interiors follow a symmetrical, center-hall plan almost without exception, and the rooms are spacious and simply finished. . . . Front doors are generally double-leaf and flanked by sidelights and a transom . . . The doors themselves become two, or sometimes four vertical flat panels. . . . Wainscot usually disappears replaced with a wide baseboard. Mantels take a post and lintel form in a simple mimicry of Greek construction, occasionally with the flat pilasters fluted, supporting a wide

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lintel and simple shelf. [Carolina Dwelling, p. 78]

Southern found approximately forty examples of this house type in Granville, Franklin and Vance counties, three piedmont counties immediately north and east of Durham county (survey conducted, 1978).

A partial survey and inventory of Durham County was conducted in 1988. According to the working files (on deposit, Survey and Planning Branch, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh) fewer than a dozen relatively intact, mid-nineteenth century Greek Revival style I-houses survive in Durham County. Most of these are located in the northeastern corner of the county near the villages of Bahama and Rougemont. In addition to their shared Greek Revival style features, they often share a common local chimney type characterized by bases and shoulders formed with fieldstones, and stacks made of brick. The houses which appear most similar in design and finish to the Adolphus W. Umstead House are the Bowling-Glen House, whose earliest known owner was Umstead's father-in-law, Captain W.W. Bowling, and the Marcus Ball Sr. House which, like the Umstead House, started as a small, one-and-one-half story single-room log house and by the mid-nineteenth century had evolved into a two-story I-house. The Ball House, like the Umstead House, also retains a rare, surviving enclosed corner staircase. The Bowling-Glen House retains many original features in common with the Umstead House including a main entrance framed by sidelights, single shoulder stone and brick chimneys, and, on the interior, wide hand-planed board walls, two vertical panel doors and simple pier-and-lintel mantels.

The two best known Durham County examples of Greek Revival style I-houses are the McCown-Mangum House (NR) and the Duke Homestead (NHL, NR, State Historic Site), both constructed in the early 1850s and both presently restored house museums. In form and detailing, the Umstead House is quite similar to these antebellum dwellings, except that the McCown-Mangum House has a low hip roof (a rare feature for Durham County, more commonly found in the northern piedmont counties) and the Duke Homestead has a rarely found central chimney.

It is difficult to precisely date the construction of the Umstead House. The present structure contains a log house, originally a single room with a sleeping loft above, the date

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of which cannot be determined since it is almost completely covered by and encased within the present house. Most of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century settlers in this region initially constructed log dwellings and <sup>it is</sup> possible that it dates from this period. Folk housing of this period generally took two forms in eastern and piedmont North Carolina, both one-room structures with lofts above. One form was of sawn lumber (usually 16 feet by 16 feet in size) and the other was constructed of logs (usually 16 by 24 feet). [Anderson, Chapter 4, p. 11 quoting William Byrd, who surveyed this area in the late 1790s] Virtually no structures built by the county's earliest settlers survive which makes this "captive" log house a potentially valuable resource for studying its construction techniques. It is impossible to determine how much alteration occurred in the cabin when the Greek Revival style farmhouse encompassed it. An examination of the present attic reveals that the cabin was at least partially dismantled (from the roof to the top plate) when the present gable roof was constructed.

Most of the structural and stylistic features of the present house seem to indicate a c. 1850 construction date, but a few other features might indicate a c. 1880 date, or a remodeling about then. If the house was built before the 1860s, it would have been built for Squire Umstead; if after 1870, for Adolphus Umstead. (Very little building activity occurred during the Civil War or early Reconstruction years when the state was economically devastated.) In any event, the house is popularly known for Adolphus Umstead, who occupied the house for over half a century. In addition to the stylistic features discussed above, construction details which appear to indicate the c. 1850 date include a heavy timber frame skeleton; roughsawn 2"x8" floor joists; the absence of a ridge board in the attic; and the profiles of the window and door architraves and the window muntins. The window muntins are virtually identical to several c. 1850 houses in neighboring Wake County (including the Crabtree Jones House and Barney Jones Plantation House) cited by John B. Wells III in his monograph, "North Carolina Building Materials and Chimney Dating," prepared for the Historic Sites Section of the North Carolina Division of Archives and History c. 1978. Those features which indicate a later date include the attic rafters constructed with circular-sawn 2"x4" boards and the decorative corbelled bands on the brick chimney stacks. Perhaps the roof or attic suffered some sort of weather-related or fire

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damage (presently undetectable) c. 1880 and Umstead rebuilt with new framing and took the opportunity to rebuild the chimney stacks, adding the fashionable corbelled courses.

An interesting feature of the Umstead House is the west wing, originally a detached one-room building connected to the main house by a roofed, open passageway (enclosed during the 1978 renovation). This wing appears to be contemporary with the main house. It is well-constructed and well finished (with returns in the gable ends, in contrast to the plain gable ends of the main house), an integral part of the dwelling, not an afterthought. According to local tradition, this wing was used as a "boys bedroom." Since the 1850 Population Schedules record that Squire Umstead and his wife were then the parents of eight children (six boys, 2 girls) and three others (2 boys, 1 girl) born during the following decade, it seems logical that he may have been the person responsible for enlarging and remodeling the old log structure. By contrast, Adolphus Umstead, who lived in the house during the 1880s, had only two children, one of each sex. He probably would not have needed additional space. A separate building or wing connected by a dog trot, hyphen, or other passageway was a fairly common feature in mid-nineteenth century North Carolina farmhouses. An 1856 diary kept by Adolphus Mangum, a northern Durham County resident, describes his family's home, Locust Grove, as such a structure, composed of "two small houses connected by a narrow passage." [Mangum Papers] In a July 1856 diary entry, Mangum writes of sitting in the connecting passageway and surveying the great variety of ornamental plants surrounding his family home--a landscape which is strikingly similar, in plant material, arrangement and feeling to that created by the present owners of the Adolphus W. Umstead House. Mangum's description is detailed enough to serve as a planting guide for the recreation of a typical c. 1850 piedmont North Carolina rural homestead:

There is an old porch in front on the west end which is enveloped by a luxuriant vine called 'Virgin Bower.' The south side of the passage is approached by an aperture lined overhead and on either side with spreading multifloras Rose vines, dahlias, crocus, hydrangea, snowball, chrysanthemum, flax, geranium, cypress, jessamine (which winds

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its way up the corner of the old building) and a variety of small roses and flowers all interspersed. Near the avenue stands an old apple tree, which not being a favorite shade tree or fruit tree, is alone permitted to stand because planted by my mother's hand. Back towards the west are two borders filled with different sorts of flowers and right at the west end stands a large spreading Cedar and locust tree. Near this stands a favorite tree called the wild cherry, the prettiest of the species I have ever seen and esteemed the most beautiful of all the trees in the yard.  
[Mangum Papers, Diary, July 28, 1852]

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### 10. Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at a stake in the west side of State Road 1616 at the northeast corner of the Property of Nancy U. Poole, as shown on the plat hereinafter referred to, and running thence north  $73^{\circ} 30' 42''$  west 177.82 feet to a stake; thence south  $76^{\circ} 18' 53''$  west 318.36 feet to a stake; then south  $9^{\circ} 16' 33''$  east 88.84 feet to a stake; thence north  $81^{\circ} 32' 14''$  west 292.18 feet to a stake; thence south  $6^{\circ} 09' 25''$  west 531.09 feet to a stake; thence south  $76^{\circ} 54' 54''$  west 1171.39 feet to a stake; thence south  $79^{\circ} 13' 04''$  west 89.64 feet to a stake; thence north  $13^{\circ} 46' 18''$  west 210.04 feet to a stake in the center line of Dials Creek; thence along and with the center line of Dials Creek the following courses and distances: north  $33^{\circ} 24' 28''$  east 112.61 feet, north  $15^{\circ} 59' 45''$  east 156.04 feet, north  $19^{\circ} 30' 39''$  west 134.74 feet, north  $41^{\circ} 38'$  east 60.21 feet, north  $5^{\circ} 34' 20''$  east 205.97 feet, north  $2^{\circ} 04' 57''$  east 55.04 feet, north  $50^{\circ} 24' 37''$  east 70.79 feet, north  $10^{\circ} 07' 33''$  west 122.39 feet, north  $35^{\circ} 32' 20''$  east 79.2 feet, north  $75^{\circ} 46' 33''$  east 69.13 feet, north  $3^{\circ} 49' 27''$  east 61.56 feet, and north  $7^{\circ} 51' 33''$  west 96.43 feet; thence leaving the center line of Dials Creek and running north  $72^{\circ} 47' 33''$  west 112.71 feet to a stake; thence north  $66^{\circ} 37' 33''$  west 115.1 feet to a stake; thence north  $9^{\circ} 18' 47''$  west 419 feet to a stake; thence south  $65^{\circ} 29' 49''$  east 1,507.89 feet to a stake; thence south  $88^{\circ} 58' 58''$  east 760.54 feet to a stake, the west side of State Road 1616; thence along and with the west side of said road in a southerly direction with the arc of a counterclockwise curve, having a radius of 3,036.76 feet, a distance of 225 feet to a stake, the place of beginning, containing 40 acres, more or less, and being the Property of John A. Biffikofer and wife, Dianne S., as per plat and survey of the Property of John A. Bittikofer and wife, Dianne S., and Ruth M. Boynton, recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds of Durham County in Plat Book 94 at page 153, to which reference is hereby made for a more particular description. [Durham County Deed Book 985, pp. 550-551; deed recorded October 23, 1978]

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency Various census schedules
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Durham and Orange counties  
Register of Deeds offices

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 40 acres

UTM References

A 

1	7	6	92	6	90	4	0	06	6	7	0
Zone	Easting		Northing								

C 

1	7	6	92	7	5	0	4	0	06	1	2	0
Zone	Easting		Northing									

B 

1	7	6	93	3	4	0	40	0	6	5	0	0
Zone	Easting		Northing									

D 

Zone	Easting		Northing									

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary was drawn to include the farmhouse and surviving farm outbuilding and remaining, intact 40 acres of land historically associated with Adolphus W. Umstead. Umstead's farm originally contained approx. 300 acres, but was subdivided in 1928 after his death.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Patricia S. Dickinson, Consultant

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date April 30, 1989

street & number 4606 Hunt Road telephone (919) 732-5439

city or town Hillsborough state N.C. zip code 27278

