

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Locust Grove

LOCAL OR COMMON

Foster House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

SE side U.S. 401, 0.25 mi. NE of Ingleside

__ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Ingleside

__ VICINITY OF

2nd

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

North Carolina

37

Franklin

069

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

__ DISTRICT

__ PUBLIC

 OCCUPIED

__ AGRICULTURE

__ MUSEUM

 BUILDING(S) PRIVATE

__ UNOCCUPIED

__ COMMERCIAL

__ PARK

__ STRUCTURE

__ BOTH

__ WORK IN PROGRESS

__ EDUCATIONAL

 PRIVATE RESIDENCE

__ SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

__ ENTERTAINMENT

__ RELIGIOUS

__ OBJECT

__ IN PROCESS

__ YES: RESTRICTED

__ GOVERNMENT

__ SCIENTIFIC

__ BEING CONSIDERED

__ YES: UNRESTRICTED

__ INDUSTRIAL

__ TRANSPORTATION

 NO

__ MILITARY

__ OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mr. George Finch

STREET & NUMBER

Route 3

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Louisburg

__ VICINITY OF

North Carolina

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

__ FEDERAL __ STATE __ COUNTY __ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Locust Grove is among the best examples of the Georgian style in Franklin County and is related architecturally to the Patty Person Taylor House. The frame dwelling, which faces northwest, is two stories high beneath a gable roof and stands upon a foundation of irregular stone blocks. It is five bays wide with a central entrance; the sides are windowless and at either gable end is a single-shoulder exterior chimney of Flemish bond with glazed headers and string mortar joints; the chimneys have stone bases and replaced stacks. Plain siding covers most of the house, but heavily molded siding survives in a few protected areas. Three-part molded frames and heavy molded sills occur at the windows, which contain nine-over-nine sash. The front door, set in a three-part molded frame, is a late nineteenth century replacement and has glazed panels. To the rear is an ell which creates a T-shaped overall composition, and another addition, probably a porch originally, fills in part of the area between the ell and the main block on the east. The evolution of these sections is uncertain, but since the stair rises in the ell, with no evidence of an earlier stair in the front section, and since weatherboarding on the rear side of the front section survives, the ell may originally have been open as a porch.

The plan of the front section--as is typical in the county--originally followed a hall-and-parlor plan; a later partition creates a center hall. The finish is quite impressive, of vigorous Georgian character. The walls are plastered above wainscots: in the northeast rooms, first and second levels, the dadoes are flush-sheathed; in the southwest rooms at both levels, there are flat-paneled dadoes with typical Georgian quarter-round moldings. Doors have six raised panels and are hung with HL hinges, the H buried in the frame.

Of particular interest are the robust Georgian mantels. That in the front southwest room is the most impressive, a unified composition that rises to the ceiling. A segmental-arched fire opening is outlined by a heavy bead. This is flanked by complex pilasters: plain, heavy pedestals rise to a level even with the top of the fire opening, where they terminate in molded caps. Upon this stand tall, fluted pilasters that rise from heavy molded bases and terminate in tall caps made up of four stages of molding--reading from top to bottom, a simple cap, another cap, a cushion element, and a molded dentil cornice. The latter carries across the mantel and around the room. Between the pilasters are raised panels outlined by heavy quarter-round moldings--above the fire opening is a horizontal panel flanked by square ones; above these are three more tall, vertical panels, a large rectangular one flanked by narrower ones.

In the other first-floor room is a less elaborate mantel of normal size. The segmental-arched opening rises quite high. It is flanked by pilasters whose first stage is flat-paneled and the second fluted. These carry a molded shelf that breaks out over the pilasters. The frieze has three raised panels, a horizontal rectangular one flanked by square ones.

The second-story mantels are of similar character but with variations. That in the southwest room has a similar fire opening and resembles that in the northeast room below, but the first stage of the pilasters is plain, not flat-paneled, and the frieze is taller, with two horizontal ranges of flat panels. The other second-story mantel is similar, but with a single range of three vertical panels in the frieze.

The stair that rises from the rear ell, back-to-front along the southwest wall, has a heavy rounded rail, square posts and balusters.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Locust Grove is a handsome, well-preserved Georgian plantation house. The identity of the first owner is uncertain, but early owners of the property include several men prominent in eighteenth and early nineteenth century Franklin County: Thomas Bell, his son Robert, and John Haywood, the latter of note in state political affairs. After 1815 it was owned by the Foster family. The two-story house features very ambitious vernacular Georgian interiors of a quality exceptional in the county and significant to the range of Georgian architecture in the state.

As early as 1764 Thomas Bell, Esq., of Bute (now Franklin) County, North Carolina, was acquiring land on Lyon's Creek. He continued to expand his land holdings until they reached Bear Swamp. His largest single land acquisition was made on the first day of January, 1768, when he purchased 560 acres in the "Parish of St. John, Bute County," on Bear Swamp, from William Williamson. This land joined his earlier purchases, and he paid one hundred pounds for the land.

Thomas Bell was descended from a prominent family of Isle of Wight County, Virginia, and was active in political affairs in Bute County, where he was a member of the Assembly in 1764 and a justice of the peace intermittently between 1765 and 1773. Bell had a mill on Lyon's Creek, and he established a store at the junction where the Louisburg to Warrenton road is joined by the Granville road, and which is mentioned in many of the early deeds of Franklin County as "Bell's old store." Thomas Bell was dead by 1789, for his son, Robert, was administrator for his large estate in that year. Stylistic evidence suggests that the house could have been built for Thomas Bell before 1789, but it is possible that it was built afterward, for his son Robert or for John Haywood who bought the place in 1790.

Robert Bell was probably the same Robert Bell who enlisted in the Continental Army and was commissioned lieutenant in the First North Carolina Regiment, September 1, 1775, and may be the same Robert Bell who was ensign in the Tenth North Carolina Regiment on May 18, 1781, promoted to lieutenant on September 8, 1781, transferred to the Second North Carolina Regiment on February 6, 1782, and served until the end of the war. He was appointed by the General Assembly on January 6, 1787, to serve as a founding trustee of the Franklin Academy.

On January 29, 1790, Robert Bell deeded to John Haywood, Jr., of Halifax County, North Carolina 208 acres "on the Edge of the road leading from Halifax to Bells old store about three quarters of a mile Below the old Store aforesd., and about two Hundred yards to the westward of the little Spring Branch . . ." The deed goes on to refer to the "Glebe lot Road," which the Price-Strother Map of 1808 shows running north of Louisburg, and is the same as the Louisburg to Warrenton road. On September 7, 1797, Bell deeded 353 acres to John Haywood, and this land was located on "the waters of Bear Swamp," and probably contained the dwelling house of Robert Bell.

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John Haywood was a native of Halifax County, North Carolina, and among the prominent men of his time in North Carolina. He was elected solicitor-general of North Carolina in 1790, attorney-general in 1791, and a judge of the Superior Court in 1794, as well as author of two legal texts. He was a trustee of both the University of North Carolina and Franklin Academy. He moved to Tennessee in 1807, and settled a plantation he named Tusculum, near Nashville. He was an outstanding figure in Tennessee until his death. On June 15, 1809 John Haywood "of the State of Tennessee" deeded to William Moore of Franklin County, 400 acres on "Bear Swamp and the waters thereof it being the place known by the name of Bells old store . . ." On February 12, 1813 Moore deeded 100 acres of the property to Eppes Moody; the bounds given in the deed mention the Halifax road and Bear Swamp, all landmarks continually associated with the property. On May 18, 1815, Eppes Moody deeded 276 acres "on Granville Road, north of Haywood Meeting House . . ." to Peter Foster, of Matthews County, Virginia.

Peter Foster was born in Gloucester County, Virginia on May 11, 1787, the son of Peter and Ann Hall Foster. His father was a soldier in the Revolution. Peter Foster (Jr.) married Elizabeth Hardin Keeble of Gwyns Island, Virginia, and they made their home at the plantation purchased from Moody, which they are said to have named Locust Grove. Mount Welcome Academy was near the Foster plantation, and an advertisement in the Raleigh Star, January 3, 1828, stated that Peter Foster's house was a place where students could board for \$36 per session. Foster was also postmaster for Macon, North Carolina, when that community was established where the Louisburg to Warrenton road connected with the Granville road. The name was later changed to Ingleside.

Peter Foster assumed proprietorship of the old Bell store, and local newspaper accounts dating from the early twentieth century state that the Foster store was a rendezvous for gamblers, and a gathering place for the men of the region. All the descriptions given indicate it to have been a spirited place. Peter Foster died in 1844, leaving a large estate in land and slaves. He owned one large plantation in eastern Wake County which he named Wakefields. He bequeathed his dwelling house to his wife, to go at her death to his youngest children, and he administered by Augustus John Foster, his eldest son, as trustee.

Elizabeth Keeble Foster died during the Civil War, and was buried with her husband in the graveyard behind the mansion house. The daughter, Lucy E. Foster, continued to live in the house. Lucy Foster was a music teacher, who was engaged to marry a Dr. Toney. Dr. Toney died the day before they were to be married at Locust Grove, and is buried in the family cemetery. Miss Lucy never married. In January, 1881, Lucy Foster's nephew, Fenton Garland Foster, eldest son of Augustus John Foster (then deceased), became her trustee, and moved into the house with his wife and children, refusing to pay any rent to his aunt, who claimed sole ownership. After Lucy Foster won a lawsuit in the county court, Fenton Foster and his family moved to Connecticut.

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Local newspaper accounts credit Fenton Foster with being an "inventive genius with no turn or taste for the practical affairs of every day life," and with being the inventor of crude type-setting and typewriting machines that were later developed into the modern machines by those names that we use today. A contemporary of Fenton Foster stated in one article that these early machines were developed while Mr. Foster was living at Locust Grove.

Miss Lucy E. Foster died at Locust Grove, and her interest in the property went to the heirs of her sister, Virginia, who had married Thomas Blacknall Cooke in 1835. Since that time there has been a succession of owners. It is now the home of George Finch.

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PAGE one

Franklin County Records, Franklin County Courthouse, Louisburg, North Carolina
(Subgroups: Wills, Deeds, Tax Records, Estate Papers).

Franklin County Records, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina
(Subgroups: Wills, Deeds, Tax Records, Estate Papers).

Kerr, Mary Hinton. Warren County, North Carolina Records, Vol. II, Abstracts of
Deeds of Colonial Bute County, North Carolina. Privately published, 1967.
Roster of Soldiers from North Carolina in the American Revolution. Published by
Daughters of the American Revolution, 1938.

