HISTORIC Dr. Samuel Perry House

SAME

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER North side S.R. 1436 just east of junction with S.R. 1407

CITY, TOWN Gupton

STATE North Carolina

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY _DISTRICT _X-BUILDING(S) _STRUCTURE _SITE _OBJECT

OWNERSHIP _PUBLIC _PRIVATE _BOTH _PUBLIC ACQUISITION _IN PROCESS _BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS _PRIVATELY OCCUPIED _UNOCCUPIED _WORK IN PROGRESS _ACCESSIBLE _YES: RESTRICTED _XNO

PRESENT USE _AGRICULTURE _MUSEUM _COMMERCIAL _PARK _EDUCATIONAL _PRIVATE RESIDENCE _ENTERTAINMENT _RECREATIONAL _GOVERNMENT _SCIENTIFIC _INDUSTRIAL _TRANSPORTATION _MILITARY _OTHER

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Mr. and Mrs. Alexander B. Alston

STREET & NUMBER Route 6, Box 321

CITY, TOWN Louisburg

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE Franklin County Courthouse

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Louisburg

STATE North Carolina

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE _FEDERAL _STATE _COUNTY _LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE
The Dr. Samuel Perry House stands amid large trees at the end of a tree-lined lane. It is the only known example of builder Jacob Holt's Italianate idiom in Franklin County that is kept in good condition. The two-story frame dwelling is a relatively simple but typical example of Holt's work, which combines elements of the Greek Revival and Italianate styles. The house is a substantial, four-square structure covered with plain weatherboards. It rests on a brick cellar and has a shallow hip roof pierced by two stuccoed, paneled interior chimneys with widely overhanging caps. Defining the three-bay front and rear facades and the two-bay sides are heavy cornerposts treated as pilasters with bracketed caps. They break out from a wide baseboard and carry a wide frieze. The latter is adorned by pendant brackets that support the wide overhang of the roof. Plain window frames contain six-over-six sash at both levels and feature louvered blinds. The central second-level window is a triple one. The windows are trabeated—in contrast to some others of Holt's houses, which have arched windows.

Across the rear of the house is a one-story original hip roof extension one bay deep; to it have been added a one-bay ell and a porch.

The interior, characteristic of Holt's work in plan and finish, follows a center-hall plan, two rooms deep, with the hall divided midway by a wall featuring a very large doorway filled with louvered doors, each leaf of which has two folding sections. (This was often used in Holt's houses, still exists at Cherry Hill also, and is documented at Vine Hill, where it was supplied for $15.00.) The panels may be folded to have a completely open doorway, completely closed, or with the outer panels closed and inner ones open. In both front and rear halls rise stairways in two flights, the front one rising front to back, the rear one back to front. In each, the open string is finished with simple moldings, and turned newels and posts and balusters square in section carry a rounded rail that ramps dramatically at the turnings. The finish generally consists of walls plastered above high, molded baseboards, some of which are marbleized. First-floor door and window frames are very heavy molded ones that break out in a distinctive "foot" at baseboard level; window frames extend to the baseboard to frame a panel. Second-level door and window frames have simple cornerblocks. The mantels in the primary rooms are also typical of Holt's work, with pilasters having panels carrying a spear-head trefoil motif at the top. These carry bracket end blocks that flank a reeded roll-like frieze (also used in typically Greek Revival mantels by Holt elsewhere). Other mantels are simple pilaster-and-frieze Greek Revival ones.
PERIOD

PREHISTORIC

ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC

COMMUNITY PLANNING

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

RELIGION

COMMUNITY ARCHITECTURE

ECONOMICS

LAW

SCIENCE

AGRICULTURE

EDUCATION

LITERATURE

SOCIETY

ARCHITECTURAL

ENGINEERING

MILITARY

SOCIALLY/HUMANITARIAN

COMMUNICATIONS

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

PHILOSOPHY

THEATER

INVENTION

INDUSTRY

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

TRANSPORTATION

OTHER (SPECIFY)

SPECIFIC DATES

Ca. 1857

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Dr. Samuel Perry House, the home of a physician and planter, was probably built in the late 1850s by Warrenton contractor Jacob Holt. It is the best-preserved of Holt's Greek Revival-Italianate idiom in Franklin County and is related by family and architecture to an important group of houses in Warren and Franklin counties.

Unlike most of Franklin County which was made up in the antebellum period primarily of small farmers holding small numbers of slaves, the northeastern corner of the county was culturally tied to the wealthy plantation society of bordering southeastern Warren County, where such close-knit families as the Alstons and Williamses held large tracts of land and numbers of slaves, and built more pretentious and fashionable houses than those typical of Franklin County. Nearly all the dwellings built in Warren County and in other nearby areas in the late 1850s are variations on a single Italianate theme, and are evidently the work of a single builder, being consistently attributed to Warrenton contractor Jacob Holt. The houses built by Holt are connected not only by their physical similarities but also by complex family and social ties.

Dominant numerically, economically and socially in antebellum Franklin County was the Perry family, said to be descendants of seven brothers who settled in the county in the eighteenth century. The Perrys married frequently with the Alstons and Williamses of Warren County, so that the gentry of the Shocco Creek area consisted almost entirely of relatives, a high proportion of whom living in houses built by Jacob Holt. Elijah Boddie Perry of Franklin County (d. 1866) married Lucy B. Williams (1797-1864)—whose brother John Buxton Williams and cousins A. D. Williams and Marina Williams Alston all were to live in Holt houses (Buxton Place, Vine Hill (NR), and Cherry Hill (NR) respectively). Elijah and Lucy had several children, of whom two would live in Holt houses—Sam and Mary (who married Archibald Taylor). Most of Elijah's children and their families are buried in a neglected graveyard on a deserted plantation not far from the Samuel Perry House—perhaps Elijah's home.

Elijah Perry was a wealthy planter; at his death in the 1840s he left his daughters numbers of slaves and his sons Green (d. 1850), Joshua (1819-1894) and Samuel (1834-1898) tracts of land and many slaves. To Samuel he left a tract on Shocco and Isinglass Creeks in Franklin County, plus about 20 slaves. In 1850 Samuel added to his holdings a tract of 513 acres "on the waters of Shocco and Isinglass Creeks," bought from the heirs of (another) Samuel Perry. By 1855 he held 3,115 acres evaluated at $9,345. Through inheritance and perhaps purchase, his brother Joshua had built up impressive landholdings as well, adjoining those of Samuel. He also owned a mill, probably that later known as Laurel Mill (NR). In 1852, Joshua sold his brother for $25 a tract of
12 acres on the waters of Shocco and Isinglass Creeks, north of the Isinglass near its mouth, "making the creek the line between Samuel Perry and Joshua Perry." For several decades, the two lived side-by-side, and were among the largest planters in the area.

Samuel Perry had attended the University of North Carolina in 1842-1843, and was a non-graduating member of the Class of 1846. Apparently in the early 1850s he married Bettie Gee (1834-1905); they had three daughters, who by the Census of 1860 were recorded as Mary (7), Lucy (5) and G. (Georgia) Anne (3). Local tradition states that the house was built in 1857 for Samuel and Bettie Perry, which would accord with other houses in the area. The 1860 Census also showed Perry listed as a physician--aged 35, whose real estate was evaluated at $31,000 and personal worth at $40,000. He owned 37 slaves in 10 slave houses; the plantation included 1,100 improved acres and 2,000 unimproved and produced among other crops 30,000 pounds of tobacco and 8 bales of ginned cotton. (Dr. Samuel Perry's holdings and wealth were relatively high in the county, but were exceeded consistently by his brother Joshua.)

Dr. Samuel Perry continued to practice medicine throughout most of the century. State business directories list him as one of twelve physicians in Franklin County in 1867, and he was one of nineteen in 1896. When he died in the fall of 1898, he left his widow Bettie the house and 500 acres, his unmarried daughter Lucy another 500 acres, and the remaining 749 was to be divided among his heirs. Bettie survived her husband a little over a year, and at her death she left the house with 500 acres plus all the household furniture to Lucy, except the organ and desk, which went to the youngest daughter, Georgia Perry Boddie.

Lucy W. Perry lived until 1925, but on July 26, 1913, she sold the home place to J. D. Alston for $2,000. In Lucy's will of 1924, she made specific bequests of her personal property. To her sister Georgia she left "my family bible and all the books formerly belonging to my father, which are now at the residence of Mr. John D. Alston, my old home place."

The house has remained in the Alston family, and is now the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Alston.
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES
Alumni History of the University of North Carolina.
Franklin County Records, Franklin County Courthouse, Louisburg, North Carolina
(Subgroups: Deeds, Wills, Estate papers).
Franklin County Records, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina
(Subgroups: Deeds, Wills, Estate papers).
Graves, Joseph A. The Alstons and Allstons of North and South Carolina (Atlanta), 1901.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA
ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 9
L&L: 36° 11' 52" 78° 09' 06"
UTM REFERENCES

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

FORM PREPARED BY
NAME/TITLE
Research and architectural description by Catherine W. Cockshutt, survey supervisor
DATE
8 April 1975

ORGANIZATION
Division of Archives and History
STREET & NUMBER
109 East Jones Street
CITY OR TOWN
Raleigh
STATE
North Carolina

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION
THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE ___ LOCAL X

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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE
North Carolina State Historic Preservation Officer
DATE 8 April 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ATTEST:
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
Dr. Samuel Perry House
Gupton
North Carolina

N.C. Highway Commission Map (no USGS map available)
Scale: 1: 1 mile
Date: 1974

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