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
Strawberry Hill
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION
STREET & NUMBER
E. side SR1100, .7 mi. N of 1003
CITY, TOWN
Enfield
STATE
North Carolina

3 CLASSIFICATION
CATEGORY
-DISTRICT
X BUILDING(S)
-STRUCTURE
-SITE
-OBJECT
OWNERSHIP
X PUBLIC
X PRIVATE
-X BOTH
-60TH
PUBLIC ACQUISITION
-IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED
STATUS
X OCCUPIED
UNOCCUPIED
-WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
PRESENT USE
-X AGRICULTURE
COMMERCIAL
-MUSEUM
-PARK
EDUCATIONAL
PRIVATE RESIDENCE
ENTERTAINMENT
GOVERNMENT
SCIENTIFIC
INDUSTRIAL
TRANSPORTATION
MILITARY
OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY
NAME
Robert N. Whitaker
STREET & NUMBER
214 Whitfield Street
CITY, TOWN
Enfield,

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC
Halifax County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER
CITY, TOWN
Halifax,

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
TITLE
Historic and Architectural Resources of the Tar-Neuse River Basin
DATE
1977

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS
Survey and Planning Branch, Archives and History
CITY, TOWN
Raleigh
STATE
NC
27611
DESCRIPTION

Strawberry Hill is a well-maintained plantation complex composed of a house and several outbuildings in an undisturbed agrarian setting. A long dirt path leads north straight to the house from the main road and forms a ring near the front and left side of the house. To the right (east) of the road are a large grape arbor and orchard. To the left (west) and rear (north) of the house stand several modest frame outbuildings. The oldest is the gable-roof smokehouse, which is thought to have been brought from another plantation perhaps when the present house was built, and may be older than this house. A garage, sheds, tractor shed, etc., stand north and east of the house, dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As the USGS map shows, the land around the plantation complex is in mixed agricultural and wooded use, traditional for the region. The nominated area includes a large open field to the west of the house, and a wooded edge around it, together with that part of the avenue to the house that now remains in the same ownership. This is part of a large farm still in family ownership and agricultural use.

The plantation house at Strawberry Hill is a traditional two-story frame dwelling, described by family tradition as built in 1792, with rear extensions from the nineteenth century. It thus illustrates not only the characteristic substantial vernacular patterns of the ca. 1800 period but also features of later development plus the important habit of many families to continue expansion of the house for generations. Here the retention of the front form essentially unaltered, with additions all located to the rear, is of particular interest.

The two-story front section of the house has the exterior end chimneys, three-bay facade, and gable roof typical of the region's conservative domestic architecture for most of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The double-shouldered chimneys are of brick laid in irregular bond, with the west one boasting an unusual lozenge pattern in glazed headers. The brick foundation is of English bond primarily. The weatherboards that sheath this portion of the house are handsomely molded in a double molded profile typical of the area's better early houses. Corner boards are also molded. The windows, of nine-over-nine sash at the first level and six-over-six typically in the second (four-over-four flanking the chimneys) usually have molded frames and sills. Some alterations have been made to some of the fenestration. The modest single-story entrance porch, sheltering a robust paneled door, is probably not original, and its date is uncertain. Simple square posts carry a flat roof with a gallery balustrade.

To the rear of the main block is an early two-story extension, not quite as tall as the front part and said to date from 1836. An exterior end chimney stands at the rear, and the whole composes a fat L form. Behind this is a small rear extension, a breezeway in turn links this to a one-story structure, originally a silk-worm house as family tradition recalls, which now serves as the dining room. Both rear elements are simply finished, weatherboarded frame structures, on high foundations like the front portion. A long shed porch extends along the west side of the front part and the ell and links to a porch sheltering the side of the kitchen. Other sheds and porches occur in the ell on the east side as well.

The interior of the front, original, section of the house follows the two-room or hall and parlor plan characteristic of all but the most modish and grand in this section of North Carolina through the early nineteenth century. Also typical of the substantial
dwellings of the eastern piedmont and western coastal plain, finish is of restrained, dignified Georgian character. Heavy raised panel doors, many with original hardware, vigorously molded door and window frames, and plain sheathed or paneled wainscots survive throughout this section. Mantels, resembling those at the Cellar in Enfield and probably other houses of the period, are of late Georgian vernacular design. Stop fluted carving articulates the sides of the tall mantel, creating almost the impression of pilasters, and flanks two large panels over the fire opening. The heavy shelf surmounts a richly molded cornice. Second-floor rooms are similarly but more simply finished.

The stair that apparently once rose along the partition wall was removed to the rear ell when that structure was added—according to family tradition in 1836. This section consists of a hallway back of the front rooms and a generously scaled rear room with handsome tripartite Federal mantel. Finish is basically similar but later than the front section, with molded door and window treatment, sheathed wainscot, and other typical components.

The rear one-story portion, with plain mid-nineteenth century finish and later material from the subsequent use of the structure, reflecting its career first as a separate silk room and later as a domestic space.

Throughout the house, original fabric from each period survives intact, illustrating the careful maintenance and continuous use of the dwelling by many generations of the same family. The simplicity and dignity of proportions and restrained, substantial detail are typical of the prosperous but not opulent lifestyle of the antebellum planters of the region.
SIGNIFICANCE

AREA OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

PERIOD

PREHISTORIC
1400-1499
1500-1599
1600-1699
1700-1799
1800-1899
1900-

ARCHAEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC
AGRICULTURE
ARCHITECTURE
ART
COMMERCIAL
COMMUNICATIONS

COMMUNITY PLANNING
CONSERVATION
ECONOMICS
EDUCATION
ENGINEERING
EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT
INDUSTRY
INVENTION
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
LAW
LITERATURE
MILITARY
MUSIC
PHILOSOPHY
POLITICS/GOVERNMENT
RELIGION
SCIENCE
SCULPTURE
SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
THEATER
TRANSPORTATION
OTHER (SPECIFY)

SPECIFIC DATES 1792, 1836 (trad.)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Strawberry Hill, according to family tradition, was built in 1792 for planter Cary Whitaker. Descendants by the same name have held at least part ownership of the house in every generation from construction to the present. A fine example of regional domestic architecture, the house reflects the prestige of the prominent Whitaker family which founded Whitakers Chapel and supplied the state with numerous military and political leaders, and the surviving farm complex recalls its role as part of the agrarian way of life that has dominated the region and county. Although no one of statewide significance lived at Strawberry Hill, the house typified the lifestyle of the planter gentry in the Roanoke Valley. In an excellent state of preservation, Strawberry Hill bridges the gap between Revolutionary and antebellum North Carolina. The current owner is a sixth generation descendant of the builder.

Criteria Assessment:

A. Associated with the eighteenth and early nineteenth century plantation economy of the Roanoke Valley and of the dominance of a group of planter families in Halifax and nearby counties

B. Associated with the locally prominent Whitaker family

C. Embodies distinctive characteristics of eastern North Carolina late Georgian vernacular domestic architecture, here very well preserved, including such components as the traditional two-room plan, Georgian style woodwork of restrained and well-executed quality, original fabric including finely molded weatherboards; and the functional structures of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century such as the smokehouse and early silk worm house
The land where Strawberry Hill now stands is part of a 530 acre tract given by Richard Whitaker to his son Cary in 1780. Richard had received 400 acres on the south side of Beech Swamp from Lord Granville in 1762; the remainder he purchased from Joseph Turberville. Richard Whitaker and Elizabeth Cary were married in Virginia but soon afterwards moved to Halifax County. They built a home about six miles from Enfield where they raised their seven children, three boys and four girls. Among these was John, who distinguished himself as a colonel in the American Revolution and as a member of the General Assembly. Though overshadowed by his older brother, Cary was still successful enough to build a fine home which he called Strawberry Hill.

Precisely when the dwelling was built cannot be determined from the documentary records. A strong family tradition has established 1792 as the year of construction, and from fragmentary information available, the date seems realistic. The tradition further maintains that the old smokehouse, which antedates Strawberry Hill, was moved from an old home site a short distance to the north towards Beech Swamp. Cary Whitaker married Penelope Carter and by 1784 was residing on his Beech Swamp property. The old house mentioned may well have been his first home. No children were born of the union as Penelope died early in his life. Cary married Sally Knight and in the meantime, he completed construction of Strawberry Hill. He died in 1816 leaving no direct descendants. No one knows why 1792 was determined as the date for the house; the current owner learned it from Waldo, Susie, and Lulie Whitaker, fourth generation descendants of the builder, Cary Whitaker.

In his will Cary Whitaker bequeathed a life estate in the plantation to his wife Sally. With no children of his own, he devised the home tract, after the death of his wife, to his nephew and namesake, Cary Whitaker, son of Colonel John Whitaker previously mentioned. Cary Whitaker was a physician who, at the time of his inheritance, was living with his wife, Martha Susan Baker Whitaker, at Centerville Plantation whose east boundary adjoined Strawberry Hill. About a year after her husband's death Sally Knight Whitaker married Thomas Goodwin. On January 10, 1818, she sold her life interest in Strawberry Hill to Dr. Cary Whitaker. Shortly afterwards, Dr. Cary, his wife Susan, and infant daughter, Anna Marie, moved to their new home.

According to local tradition, Dr. Cary Whitaker was one of many North Carolina planters in the 1830s caught up in the silk culture mania; possibly Whitaker was influenced by fellow county resident Sidney Weller, the state's leading promoter of the industry, whose famous nursery for a time specialized in the sale of mulberry trees on which silkworms feed. Whitaker planted a number of trees and constructed a special house for the production of raw silk. Like nearly every one else who hoped to reap profits from silk production, Whitaker failed even to recover his investment. Only those who sold mulberry trees realized a substantial return. By 1842, the concept had played out and died. At some point after 1842, either by Dr. Cary Whitaker or one of his descendants, the old silk house was moved and attached to the old kitchen. It was converted into a dining room connected to the 1836 addition by a breezeway. The enclosed porch seems to be a twentieth century feature.
Just as morus multicaulis was beginning its dramatic rise, Dr. Whitaker began an addition to the rear of Strawberry Hill. The chimney was nearing completion when Susan Whitaker died. In acknowledgment of the loss, the date 1836 was inscribed upon one of the chimney bricks.\textsuperscript{14} She was survived by her husband and seven children. Some years later, Dr. Cary married Harriet Joyner who, having passed the child bearing age, became the stepmother for the younger Whitaker children.\textsuperscript{15}

By 1850 Dr. Cary Whitaker had increased his plantation to nearly 1,200 acres manned by forty-eight slaves.\textsuperscript{16} Unlike most plantations in the Roanoke Valley, Strawberry Hill did not serve "King Cotton." In fact, relatively little cotton was produced: 7,600 lbs. in 1850 compared to the average cotton plantation production of about 150,000 lbs.\textsuperscript{17} Instead of producing cotton, it appears that Whitaker used his gin and ginhouse to operate a ginning service for his neighbors who were cotton planters. This, along with the sale of a little cotton, some vegetables, and corn, and stock in the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad, supplemented Whitaker's medical practice and afforded him a comfortable life.\textsuperscript{18} An 1802 graduate of the University of North Carolina with advanced education in medicine, Dr. Whitaker brought learning and a touch of elegance to Hill.\textsuperscript{19} The library was well stocked with books on a variety of topics; and Whitaker called on his patients in an elegant carriage drawn by two well-harnessed horses.\textsuperscript{20}

Dr. Cary Whitaker died on June 12, 1858. His will contained a rather unusual clause regarding the inheritance of the house. His son Cary (III) was to receive the house and 250 acres of land after Harriet Whitaker's death if he relinquished all claims to other land owned by Dr. Cary throughout the state.\textsuperscript{21} It was apparently understood that Cary (III) would give up the claims at the time he took possession of the home tract, but he did not live to see the agreement realized.

Cary Whitaker (III) was born January 1, 1832, and was the best educated member of the family. He spent two years at the University in Chapel Hill, taught school, studied law, and in 1859 became the county attorney.\textsuperscript{22} As a young man Cary Whitaker stood six feet tall with blue eyes, dark hair, and fair skin and was considered rather handsome. He never married, but family writings contend that he "appreciated a pretty face and an occasional nip of whiskey."\textsuperscript{23} Cary enlisted in the Enfield Blues at the onset of the Civil War and saw action at Big Bethel Church and other battles. When the blues were mustered out of service in November, 1861, he reenlisted in Company D, 43rd N. C. Regiment for the duration. Cary Whitaker rose to the rank of captain and distinguished himself for bravery and leadership. In 1865, while commanding a unit in the defense of Richmond, he received a rifle shot through both hands. By the time he arrived at the hospital in Danville, gangrene had set in. He died on April 20, less than two weeks after the surrender at Appomattox.\textsuperscript{24}

Although Harriet Whitaker continued to occupy Strawberry Hill, Cary's death left the ownership in question. Title reverted to his brothers and sisters in the absence of a second designated heir by their father's will.\textsuperscript{25} During the fifteen
years following the war, John Simmons (Sim) Whitaker acquired the interests of the surviving heirs. Sim was two years older than Cary and the brothers had been very close. For a few years after the death of their father, they had lived together in a house northeast of Strawberry Hill. The brothers had fought side by side and Sim was devastated by his brother's death. He himself had received an arm wound at Cedar Creek, one that gave him pain and trouble for years afterwards.

Like his brother, Sim was tall with dark hair and a full beard. At the age of thirty-six he became romantically involved with Susan Emma Waldo. They were married on January 23, 1867. Ten years later, his stepmother, Harriet Whitaker died at the age of eighty-four and Sim Whitaker became the owner of Strawberry Hill.

Emancipation of his slaves had stripped Sim Whitaker of a readily available labor force. About one third of the estate was either converted to tenant farms or sold for cash so that the remainder could be farmed efficiently. When he deeded the "land and homestead where I now live" to his wife Susan Emma in 1894, the estate had been reduced to 187 1/2 acres. Sim Whitaker continued to operate the farm, which produced a variety of products including orchard produce and timber, until his death in 1911. Susan Emma Whitaker survived her husband by thirteen years.

When Susan Emma Whitaker died in 1924, Strawberry Hill passed to her six remaining children: Waldo, Susie, Lulie, Mamie, Lizzie, and Cary. The first three never married and resided in the house as a family. During their occupancy, the screen porch was apparently closed in, and other minor alterations were made to prepare for modern conveniences. By 1966 title had passed to Waldo, Lulie, and Susie as the only remaining heirs to their mother's estate. Waldo died in 1966 and both Lulie and Susie died in 1973. No wills were recorded and the house was tied up in estates proceedings for several years. A division of the estate was made in 1977 at which time Robert N. Whitaker received the house and approximately 400 acres of land. Robert Whitaker, the current owner, is the grandnephew of Waldo, Lulie, and Susie Whitaker.

Strawberry Hill was not allowed to stand vacant even during the lengthy estate proceedings. In recent years the house was rented to Mr. and Mrs. George Vlk who take excellent care of Strawberry Hill and its grounds.
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<td>4. Whitaker interview. The tradition was told to Robert N. Whitaker by his great-uncle and aunts, Waldo, Lulie, and Susie Whitaker, great-grandnephew and great-grandnieces of the builder, Cary Whitaker. This was the line of occupancy of Strawberry Hill.</td>
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<td>5. Whitaker interview; and Halifax County Records, State Archives, Tax Lists 1790-1802. The recent discovery of the early marriage of Cary Whitaker (found in will of Kindred Carter, Penelope's father, Edgecombe County Wills) by Mrs. Robert Whitaker alters the earlier view that Cary remained a bachelor until late in life. See Hunt, <em>Whitaker Family</em>, 44.</td>
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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 5

13. Whitaker interview. See also diagram and architectural notes on house in Strawberry Hill File, Survey and Planning Branch, Archeology and Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as Strawberry Hill File.

14. Whitaker interview. This was the story told by Susan Whitaker's children, the last of whom died in 1973.

15. Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: North Carolina—Halifax County, Population Schedule, 20. Census records hereinafter cited by number and year with appropriate schedule and page. Harriet was born in 1793, making her forty-three at the time of death of Dr. Whitaker's first wife. They were married sometime before 1850. See also Hunt, Whitaker Family, 57.

16. Seventh Census, 1850, Slave Schedule; and plat of Dr. Cary Whitaker Farm, 1853, copy of original in Strawberry Hill File.

17. Seventh Census, Agricultural Schedule, 387; and Cathey, N. C. Agriculture, 114-115. The "typical" example of 186,000 lbs. is admitted by the diarist to be a bumper crop and somewhat larger than most. Allowance was made by the researcher in calculating the average figure.

18. The gin and stock are mentioned in Whitaker's will. Halifax County Will Book 5, p. 57. See the codicil for controversy over inheritance of the gin. Other crop data taken from Seventh Census, 1850, Agricultural Schedule, 387.

19. For date he was graduated, see Alumni Directory (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Alumni, 1954), 959.


22. Wellman, Rebel Boast, 27, 258 (fn. 8.).

23. Wellman, Rebel Boast, 27. See also photograph of young Cary on frontispiece.

24. Wellman, Rebel Boast, 234, 235, 255, 271 (fn. 1), 300 (fn. 2). See also index to John W. Moore, Roster of North Carolina Troops in the War Between the States, State Archives, Raleigh.

25. This was indicated in a letter concerning the estate found in the Cary Whitaker Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and by fact that John Simmons Whitaker had to acquire the interests of other heirs to have a clear title after his stepmother's death. See Halif
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27. Seventh Census, 1850, Population Schedule, 20; Wellman, Rebel Boast, frontispiece; and Eighth Census, 1860, Population Schedule, 32. See order of visitation for proof of residences of Harriet and Sim. See also Plat of Dr. Cary Whitaker Farm, Strawberry Hill File, for division of land that shows section owned jointly by Sim and Cary.

28. Wellman, Rebel Boast, 298 (fn.7.).


30. Harriet died in 1877. She was born in 1793. Hunt, Whitaker Family, 57. See also fn. 25 above.

31. Halifax County Deed Book 121, p. 349.


33. No records were found as Susan E. Whitaker died intestate. Taken here from local tradition, Whitaker interview, and reference in Waldo Whitaker's will, Halifax Will Book 16, p. 645.

34. Halifax County Will Book 16, p. 645; and Whitaker interview.

35. Whitaker interview.

36. Whitaker interview.
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


Cary Whitaker Papers. Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill.


GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: approx. 95 acres

UTM REFERENCES

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION
Strawberry Hill, Halifax County, Boundary description. The acreage in the nomination is intended to include the plantation complex, as much of the lane to the road as is now owned with the house since the division of the estate, and open and wooded farmland visually associated with the complex. The property thus begins at the road, 1011 (north side as marked on USGS map), follows the property line north and east to intersect 100-foot elevation line, follows the 100-foot elevation line north and west around the house a little creek, then northeast along the creek, to a point of the edge of the woods, then...

STATE CODE COUNTY

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FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE: Description: Catherine W. Bishir, Head, Survey and Planning Branch Research: Jerry Cross, Researcher

ORGANIZATION: Division of Archives and History

DATE: October 12, 1979

STREET & NUMBER: 109 East Jones Street

TELEPHONE: 733-6545

CITY OR TOWN: Raleigh, NC

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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE: ____________________________

DATE: November 1, 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: ____________________________

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER


Halifax County Records.
- Deeds
- Estate Papers
- Marriage Bonds
- Tax Lists
- Wills


Moore, John W. *Roster of North Carolina Troops in the War Between the States*. Index, State Archives, Raleigh.

United States Census Records, 1850-1900.


Whitaker, Robert Norton (Mrs.). Interview, June 6, 1979.
across the field and through the woods to SR 1011 again, opposite a small path. This is a small portion of the total farm of several hundred acres and composes a minimum of agrarian context for the farm complex within the present ownership. The high setting of the house gives a view across the field included to the west, into the trees. The path to the road is also important. This is outlined with a dashed line on the attached USGS map. It totals about 95 acres.
Strawberry Hill
E. side SR 1100
Enfield Vic., Granville Co., NC
Dawsons Crossroads Quad
1:24000

Zone 17
NE 266400/4004880
SE 266380/4003770
SW 265760/4003790
NW 265810/4004900
outbuildings: sheds, tractor shelter, etc.

old smokehouse

House

garden

grape arbor & orchard

field

to road

Strawberry Hill
Halifax Co., NC.

C. Bishin
1979