United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation 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 Samuel Warren Branch House

and/or common "Branch Grove"

2. Location

street & number South side NC 481
0.9 miles East of jct. with US 301 not for publication

city, town Enfield

state, county, congressional district North Carolina, Halifax 2nd

code 037, code 083

3. Classification

Category district ownership structure site object

building(s) public x private both

Public Acquisition N/A in process being considered

Status unoccupied occupied work in progress

Accessible yes: restricted yes: unrestricted no

Present Use

agriculture

museum

commercial

park

educational

private residence

work in progress

entertainment

religious

government

scientific

industrial

transportation

military

other:

4. Owner of Property

name Miss Carrie Mann

street & number 308 West Franklin St.

city, town Enfield

state North Carolina

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Halifax County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Halifax

state North Carolina

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Architectural and Historic Resources of the Tar-Neuse River Basin

date 1977

depository for survey records Survey & Planning Branch, North Carolina Division of Archives & History

city, town Raleigh

state North Carolina
Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Approximately 2.2 miles northeast of Enfield, N. C., on N. C. 481 stands "Branch Grove", an eighteenth century Federal period tripartite plantation house with earlier Georgian cottage attached. "Branch Grove" faces northwest. The Georgian structure is attached to the extreme south corner of the tripartite house. This addition, according to the tenant, Mr. George Adam Hux, was moved up approximately 200 feet from the rear of the main house in the 1920's. Some siding on this structure is beaded. Both structures have pilastered corners; the upper portion of each boxed pilaster is convex, facing the inner panel. Each of these convex crowns is ornamented with three small scallops and a small circular mark centered in the convex crown. There are no cornices found under the eaves of either structure.

The northwest facade of the tripartite structure has shutters on every sash, apparently from a more modern period. They are not of the same type as a broken stack which have movable louvers with operating stick and a slightly raised molding between the louvers and the frame found under the foundation of the house. This type of shutter appears on many other federal buildings in area such as "Kelvin Grove" near Scotland Neck. Mr. Hux stated that the shutters on the northeast facade are the remnants of shutters taken from both structures.

Both structures are set on brick piers approximately 4 feet above the ground. There is evidence indicating that there was once a basement. This theory is supported by a partial basement under the rectangular building, which is now added to the rear of the main house. This basement stretches across the northwest side of the dependency and carries a small window, protected by square vertical bars set diagonally. This type of basement window grille is a typical Federal period feature in northeastern North Carolina and probably dates from when the house was built.

The chimneys on the tripartite house have a graduated swollen base, concave shoulders, and free standing stacks. The southeast chimney is two stories, with a single bell shaped shoulder on the second level. This stack is original; the southwest and northeast chimney stacks have been replaced. The southeast chimney is capped with a three tier lip. The bell shaped shoulder is unusual and each scallop is emphasized by a row of butted brick. Mr. Hux stated that the chimney on the dependency building also had this unusual shoulder. This chimney, which was on the northeast wall of the dependency, had a double shoulder from evidence provided by a break in the siding boards forming an outline of the old chimney. A cinder block stove flue replaces the original.

The northwest facade of the tripartite structure consists of a three bay, two-story central section crowned with a large pediment, and flanked by a one-story, one-bay wing on either side. The front windows in each wing consist of 6/9 sash. The same type of sash is also found on the second floor in all three bays. The size of the panes in all front sashes is 8 inches by 10 inches. Under the center second floor window is a one-story pedimented roof one-bay porch. The porch is flanked on either side by a 9/9 sash window. Under the porch is a casement door crowned by an arched
fanlite, with panes which radiate out but not from the center. The porch, according to the owner, was replaced and echoes the dimensions of its predecessor. There are two square columns on either side of the porch with a railing between each pair and the corner columns to the pilasters butting the house. The railing appears to be from the original porch. Centered in the large pediment is a circular air vent. The circular louvered vent is contained within a square frame. In the apex of each corner of this square is a stamped daisy motif. Both the square and round frames of this vent and the frame around the fanlite above the front door are perforated with small holes which appear to be cut with a 3/4 drill auger. These holes also appear as a crescent around the stamped daisy motifs of the central pediment vent, and on the inner frame of the front door fanlite.

This casement door consists of two doors divided into 5 panels: in each door, the top panel is horizontal, under the top panel are two vertical panels, with two vertical panels below. The front hall is approximately 10 by 20 feet and runs southwest to northeast, transversing the front of the house. Off each side of the front hall are doors which lead into the two wings. In the south corner of the front hall, the staircase turns the corner. The newell is a simple chamfered post; the rail is thick and rounded on top, beaded below; the spindles are square. In this corner, under the turning stair, is a small closet with a four panel door. The two windows on the northwest wall use the chair rail which rests on a solid band of wainscoting for their sill.

All doors, except two replacements, have six panels. The two exceptions, the southeast exterior door of the dependency and a Victorian door leading to the east porch of the tripartite. All of the original doors have raised panels on one side and are flat on the reverse side. The doors on the southwest porch exhibit wood graining.

In the main room, behind the transverse front hall, is the most elaborate mantel in the house. There is a sunburst in its center panel and a proliferation of beaded and sculpted moulding. The mantel is 68 inches wide and 60 inches high. On either side of this mantel is a 9/9 sash window. On the southwest wall is a door leading onto a screened-in southwest porch which connects the tripartite to its dependency. Unlike the front hall, the wainscoting in the main room is panelled, with a panel under each window—the width of the window. There is a Victorian door which cuts through the middle of such a panel, indicating that it perhaps replaced a window.

The southwest wing of the tripartite is smaller than the northeast. Centered in the southwest wall is a simple mantel consisting of three lateral panels supported by undulating posts. On either side of this mantel is a 4/6 sash window. In the center of the northwest wall is a 6/9 sash window, and directly across from it a Federal door which leads to the southwest porch. The three windows rest on the chair rail; the wainscoting is not panelled.
The northeast wing is also one room, but is larger than the southwest. The northwest wall has a centered 6 over 9 sash window which rests on the chair rail above an unbroken stretch of wainscoting. A simple mantel, of the same type found in the southwest wing, occupies the same position in this room. Sash windows butt either side of this mantel, however the east 6/9 sash is wider. The north window has a 4 over 6 sash. The southeast wall is pierced by a door which butts the south corner. Centered between this door and the east corner is a 6/9 sash. This door and window open upon the east porch.

The second floor contains the stair hall on the west, two bedrooms which have no fireplace on the southwest and northeast sides, an axial hall, and one winter bedroom on the southeast rear. Both halls on this floor, and both bedrooms have an 8 inch wide chair rail which is beaded on both sides, and no wainscoting. All of the windows on this floor are 6/9 sash type and rest on the chair rail.

The southwest room has one window in the south corner. The rear room has a fireplace centered in the southeast wall with sash windows butting the mantel. A sash window is centered in both southeast and northeast walls. Wainscoting of extremely wide boards circles the room.

Attached to the rear of the tripartite is a rectangular 1 ½ story Georgian building which has apparently moved up from the rear of the house. A porch with two original pilasters connects the two structures. The camfered pilaster on the tripartite is much more attenuated than the pilaster on the dependency. The roof of this dependency is side gabled with the ends facing southwest and northeast.

All of the original doors in this structure except one follow the formula for door composition found in the tripartite and like the others vary considerably in width. From the porch between this structure and the tripartite block one enters a small room. The southwest wall is solid and the northeast wall is pierced by a 6/4 sash window at the north corner. Wainscoting circles the room and is broken on the northeast wall, as is the floor indicating the possibility of a previous fireplace. This space is 62 inches wide and butts the sash window. The foundation is also built up to accommodate a fireplace.

From this room the main dependency room is entered. The northwest wall contains two doors equally spaced in the wall. These doors are wood grained. The southeast wall contains one 9/9 sash and a 40 by 82 inch Georgian door leading to the southeast porch. This door is unusually large and the paneling varies from the other doors in the house. There are two horizontal panels at the top with two rows of three equally proportioned vertical panels below. The northeast wall houses a 4/4 sash butting an unusually large mantel. This 70 x 66 inch wide mantel matches a slightly smaller mantel on the second floor of the tripartite, and consists of a shelf supported by a row of dentils resting on stiated lyre-shaped lentils. There is a closed stair on the south corner. A replacement battened door is one step up from the floor. Under this stair is a small closet; the door retains "H and L" hinges. Centered between the stair and the west corner is a 9/9 sash window.
In the extreme west corner of this building is a small shelved room entered through a door in the northwest wall of the main room. The shelves, wainscoting, window and door frames are all painted a deep Tuscan green color so often found in local Federal period buildings. The shelves are scalloped on top and bottom. In the south corner of the southwest wall there is a 9 over 9 sash between the shelves and the corner. A 9/9 sash is centered in the northwest wall. The wainscoating in this room is unpanelled.

The second floor of this building has one attic room under the slope of the roof. The stair enters the southwest side of the room and is protected by a balustrade, square spindles, a thick rail and 4 by 4 inch post. Centered in southwest and northeast walls are replacement 4/4 sash. Centered between the northeast window and the east corner is an opening for a small fireplace. The mantel is missing.

Attached to the southeast of the dependency is a reconstructed 9 by 20 foot porch containing various parts of its predecessor. Among the original parts are a solid square chamfered 10 inch wide post, a built in bench, and fat rail which is beaded on both sides.

The yard is approximately three acres of the approximately 1000 acres of the farm. There are no other buildings in the yard. There are two barns and four tobacco barns built in the twentieth century.
8. Significance

Built in the late 1840s by Samuel Warren Branch, "Branch Grove," as it is now known, is an amazingly intact late Federal-style tripartite house with an earlier Georgian-style house attached to it. Documented by an insurance policy application, the house is a retardataire member of the remarkable group of three-part houses produced by the Halifax-Warren planter society of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The history of the earlier house is unclear, but decorative elements of the larger house were used on the front of the smaller one to incorporate it into the overall design of the latter, and a mantle from the former was used in the second floor bedroom of the larger house. Both houses exhibit fine woodwork and exterior details of the two-story pedimented central block suggest that the builder was aware of some of the Greek Revival decorative elements popular at the time the house was constructed. The builder of the house, Samuel Warren Branch (1803-1863), was a member of the prominent Halifax County Branch family and the father of Alpheus Branch, founder of Branch Banking and Trust. The seat of a more than 1,300 acre antebellum plantation, the house has been owned by the locally prominent Parker family since 1866 and continues in agricultural use.

Criteria assessment:

A. Associated with the social, economic, and political development of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century northeastern North Carolina; particularly with the rich planter society of Halifax and Warren counties.

B. Associated with the prominent Branch and Parker families of Halifax County.

C. Although constructed late in the 1840s, "Branch Grove" must be counted among the group of Federal-style tripartite houses which were considered fashionable among the planter class during the first quarter of the nineteenth century and are concentrated in Halifax and Warren counties. The smaller house attached to the rear of the main house is also of interest as a well preserved example of Georgian-style architecture.

D. Archeological testing at "Branch Grove" is likely to yield information concerning mid to late nineteenth century farm life and to answer questions concerning the history of the earlier Georgian-style house.
Branch Grove, near Enfield in Halifax County, stands on land held by the prominent Branch family for more than a century. John Branch was the first to come to the area north of Beech Swamp where he had acquired 200 acres by 1748. Through will and deed the property was passed to his descendants until Samuel Warren Branch, John's great, great-grandson, inherited it from his father William about 1824.

S. W. Branch, a distant relative of both Governor John Branch (1817-1820) and Confederate General Lawrence O'Brien Branch, was born in 1803 on his father's plantation known as Landmons. He married Mary Wilkins in 1827 and among their children was Alpheus Branch who later moved to Wilson and founded the Branch Banking and Trust Company. Mary Branch died in the mid 1840s and Samuel remarried in 1849. His new bride was Eveline F. Gary, twenty years younger than he, and she may have instigated the building of Branch Grove.

S. W. Branch had become a successful planter by the mid 1840s. His courtship of Eveline Gary may have inspired him to build a fine new home on another part of the plantation he had inherited from his father. It seems more than just coincidence that the marriage took place just a few months after the house was completed. An insurance application dated August 3, 1849, described the house as it appeared when built:

Situated due South From Halifax 10 miles and 2 miles from Enfield . . . of Wood and nearly new 34 x 40, 2 stairs (stories) high including wings (on) each side which are single story, 4 chimneys and six fireplaces, attached is a room 20 x 30, 1 story high no stairs, ashes carefully removed, kitchen is 60 feet South from house, Small house is over 100 feet off, Laundry is 60 feet west of house.

Samuel W. Branch and his second wife Eveline had six children, three boys and three girls, who were all born at Branch Grove. Between 1850 and 1860, Branch nearly doubled the value of his real estate, owning 1,336 acres listed at $16,000. His personal property was estimated at $70,000 reflecting the value of thirty-nine slaves, considerable household furniture, farming equipment, livestock, and various stocks and bonds. Records indicate that Branch employed a tutor named Thomas W. Gregory to teach the members of his household. For his services, Gregory was given room and board and a small living allowance. By 1860, Branch had a full household which included himself and his wife, five children, the school teacher Gregory, Betsy Wilkins (age 40), E. T. Branch (age 19 and possibly a son by first wife, Mary W. Branch), Thomas Sykes (age 31) the farm overseer, Oliver Tillery, and Eliza Tillery. The last two were minor wards for whom Branch served as guardian.
Thomas Sykes, the overseer, also collected rent from at least three tenants on Branch Grove lands. This also provided a substantial income for the Branch family, and on the eve of the Civil War, S. W. Branch appeared well on his way to becoming one of the wealthiest men in the county. His devotion to the Confederacy, however, brought financial ruin. Early in the war, Branch invested heavily in Confederate bonds and exchanged much of his capital for Confederate currency. He died in 1863 unaware of the fate that awaited his family.

Before his death, S. W. Branch made a detailed will providing for his wife, children, and others. One provision called for his executors to sell his real estate, including the "plantation whereon I now reside," and to place the proceeds in a general fund to be held as part of the estate of his children. Too much of his assets, however, had been tied up in Confederate bonds and currency. After the war, creditors, backed by Federal law and a constitutional amendment, demanded U.S. currency and payment of debts began to strip the estate which Confederate inflation at one point had driven up to a valuation of nearly $200,000. Both real and personal property had to be sold to meet the obligations, leaving practically nothing for his heirs. Branch Grove Plantation was sold at public auction on November 5, 1866, at which time James Harvey Parker became the highest bidder at $18,000.

James Harvey Parker was born in Halifax County in 1823. Before the Civil War he lived first at Sandy Hill Plantation near Heathsville and later at Rosehill near Whitaker's Chapel. He owned at least three major plantations and several lots in Enfield. He continued to reside at Rosehill until the 1880s when he moved to Enfield, having previously turned over use of Branch Grove Plantation to his son William Fletcher Parker. James Harvey lived to be seventy-six years of age, and his last will and testament dictated the ownership of Branch Grove for the next three generations. The specific provision called for his son Romulus B. Parker to hold the "Samuel Branch place lying on the east side of the road from Enfield to Crowell's Crossroads (now NC 481) containing about 700 acres" in trust for the sole and separate use of Bettie J. Parker, the wife of William F. Parker for and during her lifetime. After her death, the property was to pass to Mary E. Mann, daughter of William F. and Bettie J. Parker, with the same conditions. Following the death of Mary Mann, the house and land was to be given to her children for their use. The current owner, Carrie A. Mann, is the daughter of Mary Mann and her husband Benjamin D. Mann.

William Fletcher Parker apparently moved into Branch Grove shortly after his father purchased it at public auction. He was born at Sandy Hill Plantation on November 11, 1842, and at age nineteen, he had enlisted in Company F, 7th Regiment of Confederate Cavalry. W. F. Parker rose to the rank of second lieutenant and was one of the commanding officers when his regiment was combined with others to form the 16th Battalion of North Carolina Cavalry. Parker was engaged in numerous skirmishes in the eastern North Carolina campaigns. After moving to Branch Grove, Parker settled into the life of a farmer and part-time politician. He served as a commissioner of Halifax County for some years after the war. W. F. Parker also represented Halifax County for two terms in the state legislature, but that came after he moved to Enfield in the early 1880s.
William Fletcher Parker seems to have been the last member of the family to live in the house. It was apparently his wife, Elizabeth (Betsey) Parker who officially named the house Branch Grove; at least hers was the first recorded use of the name. Since the early 1880s Branch Grove has been rented to tenants. Those who were known to have lived in the house include Miss Margaret Quincey (around the turn of the century); Emma Lewis (by 1914); Dudley Banks Barnes (1930s); Marvin Pippen (1940s or 1950s); and George A. Hux (1970s and perhaps earlier). Despite service as rental property for nearly a century, Branch Grove appears to be in remarkable good condition, which is a tribute to the careful consideration of the owners who obviously feel a love for the family home.
FOOTNOTES

1 Enfield Progress, January 23, 1973. Based on research conducted by Dr. William M. Mann, Jr., of Warren, Pennsylvania. Dr. Mann is the nephew of the current owner, Carrie A. Mann, and the historian of the Parker family.

2 Not all of the transfers were recorded, but the following records substantiate the family tradition: Halifax County Wills 1758-1900 (loose copies), North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, William Branch (1794), and William Branch (1808), hereinafter cited by name of testator and location of document; Halifax County Estates Papers, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, William Branch (1824), hereinafter cited by name of estate and "Branch Genealogical Chart Outline," prepared by William M. Mann, Jr. (July 1977), copy in files of Survey and Planning Branch, Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as "Branch Genealogy."

3 "Branch Genealogy"; and Will of William Branch, Sr. (1808), State Archives. This was Samuel W. Branch's grandfather; however, a provision in the will divides land and makes reference to "where my son William (S. W. Branch's father) now lives called Landmons."

4 Halifax County Marriage Bonds, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as Halifax Marriage Bonds. The bond was dated December 12, 1827. See also "Branch Genealogy" and Alpheus Branch File, Research Branch, Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.

5 Death date approximated from birth date of Alpheus Branch (1843) and remarriage date of Samuel W. Branch. See "Branch Genealogy" and Halifax Marriage Bonds. For comparison of ages see Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, Halifax County, North Carolina, Population Schedule, 146. Census records hereinafter cited by number and year.


8 Eighth Census, Population Schedule, 11. Branch controlled the estate of his wards which included eighteen slaves and other personal property valued at $18,000. See Eighth Census, 1860, Slave Schedule, 235, as well as above Population Schedule.
9 See S. W. Branch Estate Papers.

10 See S. W. Branch Estate Papers.

11 Halifax County Will Book 5, p. 118.

12 See S. W. Branch Estate Papers.

13 Halifax County Deed Book 61, p. 473.

14 "Branch Genealogy."

15 See will of James Harvey Parker, Halifax County Loose Wills, State Archives, Raleigh.

16 Will of James Harvey Parker. See fn. 15. See also "Branch Genealogy."

17 Will of James Harvey Parker. See fn. 15.

18 "Branch Genealogy"; and Index to Moore's Roster of North Carolina Troops in the War Between the States. State Archives, Raleigh.


21 "Branch Genealogy."

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property **approx. 27 acres**

Quadrangle name **Enfield, NC**

Quadrangle scale **1:24000**

**Verbal boundary description and justification**
The area included in this nomination is an arbitrary polygon shown on the enclosed USGS map. It includes the house, a tenant house, tobacco barns and storage shed, as well as open cultivated fields. The boundary provides a visual and historical setting for the house which was the seat of what remains a much larger plantation.

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>state</th>
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**11. Form Prepared By**

- **Bob Gregory, Consultant**
- **Jerry L. Cross, Researcher**
- **Survey and Planning Branch**
- **Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section**
- **June, 1981**
- **NC Division of Archives and History**
- **109 East Jones Street**
- **telephone (919) 733-6545**

**12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification**

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

- [ ] national
- [X] state
- [ ] local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89–665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

**State Historic Preservation Officer signature**

**State Historic Preservation Officer**

**date** July 9, 1981

For HCRS use only

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

**Keeper of the National Register**

**Chief of Registration**

**date**
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Halifax County Records
Deeds
Estates Papers
Marriage Bonds
Record of Settlements
Wills

Maps
Price-Strother Map of North Carolina, 1808
MacRae-Brazier Map of North Carolina, 1833
Map of Halifax County 1914-1915

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


Works Progress Administration. Pre-1914 Graves Index. State Archives, Raleigh.
Branch Grove
Enfield vic.
Enfield Quad
Zone 18  Scale 1/24000
Approx. 27 acres
A  18 263600/4009060
B  18 263840/4009180
C  18 263840/4008700
D  18 263600/4008700