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:* Albin B. Swindell House and Store  

and or common  

2. Location  

street & number: South side US 264, opposite junction with SR 1304  

not for publication  

city, town:  

--- vicinity of: Swindell Fork  

state: North Carolina  

code: 037  

county: Hyde  

code: 095  

3. Classification  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Present Use</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| district  | building(s) | public | occupied | agriculture | museum  
| structure | private | unoccupied | commercial | park  
| site | both | work in progress | educational | private residence  
| object | Public Acquisition | accessible | entertainment | religious  
| | | yes: restricted | government | scientific  
| | | yes: unrestricted | industrial | transportation  
| | being considered | no | military | other:  

4. Owner of Property  

name: Mrs. Mary-Louise Swindell McGee  

Telephone: (919) 926-5091  

street & number: Route One, Box 194  

city, town: Swan Quarter  

--- vicinity of:  

state: North Carolina  

code: 27885  

5. Location of Legal Description  

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.: Hyde County Court House  

street & number:  

city, town: Swan Quarter  

state: N. C.  

code:  

6. Representation in Existing Surveys  

<table>
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Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The property of Albin B. Swindell (1846-1919) and his son, Harry Swindell (1889-1979)--approximately 120 acres of land, a house expanded ca. 1903, a ca. 1890 store, and several farm outbuildings--was a community center for the nearby farmers and seasonal hunters and fishermen for over a hundred years in this remote location, known as Swindell Fork, in Hyde County. The house, the store, and the outbuildings built on the 120 acres of land purchased by A. B. Swindell from Ambrose Howard in 1877, exist on a rural setting which remains much the same as it was in the early 20th century. The buildings, facing north at the junction of S.R. 1304 and U.S. 264, are clustered in the southwest corner of the original 120 acres which was in the shape of a triangle. Behind the buildings, approximately 20 acres of the original land is open land and approximately 100 acres of the original land is forest. The property remains intact today except for two lots which Mary McGe, the present owner and granddaughter of A. B. Swindell, sold to black tenant farmers.

The buildings and their immediate grounds occupy about an acre of land. The store, facing north just off S.R. 1304, is situated some distance northwest of the house. Between the store and the house, there are one small and three large elms. Behind the house is a row of outbuildings: a ca. 1903 smokehouse southwest of the house, a ca. 1903 pumphouse west of the smokehouse, a ca. 1945 washhouse/packhouse just west of the pumphouse and directly behind the house, and a ca. 1930 chicken house southwest of the house. A barn built in 1903 was removed in 1981. There are sycamores, black walnuts, and apple trees in a line south of the outbuildings on the edge of the fields.

The store first opened by A. B. Swindell in 1875 was in a barn located on 11/20 of an acre on the west side of U.S. 264. The barn burned in the 1890s and was replaced by the present stor building which was moved a short distance south in 1920 when the highway was widened. The store, where dry goods, country produce, hats, books, etc. were sold, had the first post office, ca. 1890, and the first telephone, ca. 1919, in the community which was called Swindell Fork. It was operated by Albin until his death in 1919 and then by Harry until his death in 1979. The store is now an informal family-owned museum.

When A. B. Swindell purchased the land from Ambrose Howard in 1877, there was a one-story frame house on the property. The house, raised to two stories and expanded in 1903 by A. B. Swindell, had a center hall plan, a porch across the front facade, a shed porch attached to the south elevation, and a one-story detached kitchen house. In 1945, Harry Swindell extended the front porch partially along the east gable end of the house, enclosed the original rear porch to make a bedroom and a bath, removed the old kitchen house and built a kitchen wing with a porch at the southwest corner of the house. In 1925, Harry Swindell expanded the living room by removing the partition between the hall and the living room. He also reversed the direction of the stairway which now runs south to north.

The store, a one-story frame structure with an attic, is covered with painted weatherboards and it rests on low brick piers. A fence outlines the loading yard in the front of the store. The windows and doors all have plain board surrounds. Some of the windows and doors have board and batten blinds. The north front of the store has a projecting
overhang with a scalloped edge. Also on the front facade, a central double-leaf door with two raised panels each and a double-leaf screen door are flanked by six-over-six sash windows with board and batten blinds. A six-over-six sash attic window with a louvered blind is above the front door. There are no windows on the east or the west sides of the building. On the rear elevation there is a single central door and a screen door with a board and batten outer door. This arrangement of doors is a reverse with the board and batten door on the outside. To the left of the back door is a single four-over-four sash window with a board and batten blind. There is also a pair of symmetrically placed four-over-four sash attic windows.

The interior of the store, one single space, has open shelves along the east and west walls with waist level drawers at various points. In front of the shelves, along the east and west walls, there are long wood counters with smaller glass display cabinets on top. The shelves have a simple cornice across the top. The walls are sheathed with 1x6 pine boards and the floor has 1x3 pine planks. The windows and doors all have plain board surrounds. An enclosed stairway west of the rear door and between the door and the window, rises to the attic. The door to the stair is board and batten. The attic, with simple pine boards, has two spaces used for storage—a larger open space and a smaller enclosed room in the southeast corner.

The present house, an I house, a two-story, three-bay, one-room-deep frame structure, has a porch that runs along the front and part of the east side, an enclosed shed porch along the south rear side, and a one-story kitchen wing with a porch that is connected to the shed porch at the southwest corner of the house. A chimney on the west side of the main house is laid in a common bond with stepped shoulders. The entire house is covered with weatherboard and the roof is covered with green asphalt shingles. All the windows and the doors have plain board surrounds with a narrow projection over the top of the lintel. The 1903 windows are six-over-six sash with shutters that have the original hinges and pins. The two-story main house is three bays on the front and two bays each on the sides. There are also two four-pane attic windows in the gabled section of the house. The enclosed shed porch has three symmetrically-arranged windows on the east side and two paired windows flanking a single window on the south side. In the kitchen wing, a window on the east side holds four-over-four sash and a pair of windows, centrally located on the west side, have single panes. The front porch (ca. 1903) extended to the east elevation in 1945, has square posts and a round handrail with square pickets. The rear porch off the kitchen wing has 3x4, 1x2 supports and poured concrete steps with simple black iron railings.

The rooms in the main house building, the enclosed shed porch, and the kitchen wing are simple arranged and detailed. All the windows and doors have simple board surrounds. The four-panel doors throughout the house are original to the ca. 1903 expansion of the house. The front door, with three horizontal panels below two glazed patterned glass panes, opens into the living room on the west side of the main block. The original center hall was removed ca. 1925 to increase the size of the living room. The stairs, now in the living room, were reversed so that they run south to north along the surviving partitioned wall. The stairs have a square newel, a round handrail, and square balusters. The walls of the living room were covered with sheetrock, ca. 1945. The
floors are of replacement oak. The mantel has plain board piers with a wide board frieze and a projecting shelf with a shaped front. East of the living room is a bedroom. Its walls are sheetrocked and the floors are of replacement oak. There is a modest closet in the room's northeast corner. On the south wall of the living room, a four-panel door which originally opened onto a porch, now enclosed, now opens into a small hall which connects to a ca. 1945 bedroom and bath in the rear shed. On the south wall of the living room, just east of the single four-panel door, a pair of doors with fifteen glass panes each open into the dining room. The dining room extending from the enclosed shed porch into the kitchen wing has paired six-over-six sash windows on the south wall and a single six-over-six sash window on the north wall. The walls of the dining room are of sheetrock and the floors are covered with carpet. A four-panel turn-of-the-century door also opens from the dining room into the hall in the enclosed porch.

The second floor retains the center-hall plan with a bedroom on either side. The floors are of the original pine and the walls are sheetrocked. There is a six-over-six sash window on the north end at the stair landing. The doors into the bedrooms, located at the south end of the hall where the stair originally landed, are four-panel turn-of-the-century doors with porcelain knobs. The north bedroom has a small fireplace and a plain mantel with a wide multiboard frieze shelf. A simple framed closet was installed in 1973. The east bedroom has sheetrocked walls, original baseboards with a round edge and a simple framed corner closet.

The four outbuildings are lined up just behind the house. A ca. 1945 washhouse/packhouse, the largest of the outbuildings, and located directly behind the house, has a gabled roof and an engaged shed porch on the north front elevation. It was built with reused lumber and covered with unpainted weatherboard. It sits on low brick piers. The building has two rooms—a pack room where chickens were dressed on the west end, and a wash room on the east end. Both rooms are fully sheathed in 1x3 pine boards and the floor is pine planks. The pack room has shelves built around its four sides. A ca. 1930 chicken house just east of the washhouse/packhouse is a shed-roof building. It is sheathed with varying width vertical boards and it has a tin roof. There is a simple hinged board door and narrow horizontal openings on the east side and narrow horizontal openings on the south side. East of the washhouse/packhouse, a ca. 1903 pumphouse previously used as the power generating house is a simple shed-roof building with board and batten covering. It has a board and batten door on the north front side. The roof is of ribbed tin. The floor is recently poured concrete. A ca. 1903 smokehouse just beyond the pumphouse is a gabled-roof building with a shed on the east side elevation added in 1980. It has board and batten covering and a board and batten door on the north gable end. The roof is of ribbed tin.

The Swindell family store, house, and various outbuildings, and its acreage, represent an essentially unchanged early twentieth-century mercantile/farm operation significant locally as a trading center for the farmers and seasonal hunters and fishermen in Hyde County for over a hundred years.
The rural setting and lack of extensive later property development presents a high probability for significant archaeological resources related to the house and store. Although the property has not been tested, the presence of trash pits, privy remains, garden remains, and additional ancillary buildings is almost assured. Trash pits could provide evidence of the types of materials available in the store, changes in those materials through time, and an indication of the socio-economic level of the community. A comparison of materials related to the house and those related to the store could indicate the relative status of the Swindells. Remains associated with the store and house would add significantly to the understanding of the operation of the store, and provide indications of changing social priorities in the community.
This architectural description of the Albin B. Swindell House and Store is based on field survey, photography, and recording by Davyd Foard Hood on October 22, 1984. Register of Deeds, Hyde County, Book 14, pp. 357-358.

This is according to Mary McGee, A. B. Swindell's granddaughter, the present owner of the property.

Hyde County, Register of Deeds, Book 13, p. 372.

This information came from Mary McGee via her father, Harry Swindell.

Approximate dates for the post office and the telephone come from Mary McGee via her father, Harry Swindell. The family also has a collection of documents such as store ledgers, invoices from the telephone company, and letters addressed to Swindell Fork.

Hyde County, Register of Deeds, Book 14, pp. 357-358.

This information comes from Mary McGee who was living in the house at the time, 1945.

ibid.
8. Significance

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Specific dates | ca. 1875 - 1930 | Builder Architect | Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Albin B. Swindell House and Store, retaining today much of their early 20th century appearance and character, are locally important in the history of Hyde County as the site of Swindell Fork, a small trading and community center. A small general merchandise store has been operated at this location for over one hundred years by two generations of the Swindell family. The property carries the name of Albin B. Swindell (1846-1919), the son of a Primitive Baptist minister of the same name, who opened a store here in 1875 in a former barn. In 1877 he acquired the adjoining Howard farm—a tract of 120 acres including a one-story house—and came there to live with his bride, Cora Ensley Gibbs, the daughter of David S. and Zada J. Gibbs. Near the turn of the century, Albin B. Swindell made improvements to the property which brought it largely to its present appearance. Around 1890 he erected a new store—the present building—where he carried on his mercantile trade until his death in 1919; Albin’s son "Harry" continued to operate the store here until his death. The store building also housed a post office and an early telephone which was used by members of the surrounding community in this remote section of North Carolina. About 1903 Albin B. Swindell raised his one-story (or story and a jump) house to two full stories. He also erected the surviving smokehouse and pumphouse and a barn which was pulled down in 1981. Albin B. Swindell and his son, John Harold "Harry" Swindell (1889-1979), raised their families here on property which remains the residence of the younger Swindell’s daughter, Mary-Louise (Swindell) McGee (b. 1921). The Swindell house and store, its outbuildings, fields and woodlands exist today as an intact reminder of an early 20th century trading and community center, Swindell Fork. These cultural units, once commonplace in North Carolina, are becoming increasingly rare in the state and this one is the most intact survivor in Hyde County outside the Lake Landing Historic District.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

A. The Albin B. Swindell House and Store are associated with the development of crossroads trading centers in rural, largely agricultural North Carolina in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

B. The complex being nominated is associated with the lives of Albin B. Swindell (1846-1919) and his son John Harold "Harry" Swindell (1889-1979) who carried on mercantile operations here since 1875—and in the surviving building since about 1890—and farming operations on the home tract of 120 acres since 1877. Both these men were locally important community leaders. The younger Swindell was elected to and appointed to a number of local political offices.

C. The Swindell house, store, and its outbuildings are the structures of a small crossroads trading center and represent typical buildings of their period in Hyde County. Although the house which was raised to two stories about 1903 was somewhat expanded in the 1940s, the store survives intact and unaltered from the 1890s. Together these buildings in their unspoiled rural location are an important complex recalling late 19th and early 20th century life in Hyde County.
The Albin Swindell House and Store are located in Hyde County in the small community of Swindell Fork, only a few miles from the county seat of Swan Quarter. The Swindell Store dates from 1875 and has been in its present building since about 1890. The house dates from the mid-19th century but was expanded into its present form by the Swindells in 1903.

The Swindell House was built around 1850 by Martin and Rebecca Howard. Martin Howard (born 1800) was a farmer. In 1860, he owned real estate valued at $2,000, a personal estate valued at $1,000, and livestock valued at $150. Howard owned 185 acres and grew 400 bushels of corn in that census.

In 1875, Albin Swindell opened a general merchandise store in a barn located on a small tract of land purchased from Henry Spencer for $350. Two years later, Swindell purchased the Howard house and 120 acres from Ambrose Howard, the son of Martin and Rebecca Howard, for $800. Also in 1877, Swindell married Cora Gibbs.

The Swindells continued to farm after the opening of the store. The 1880 census shows that 40 of their 120 acres were under cultivation and that their real estate was valued at $1,000. Swindell grew 100 bushels of corn, 1½ bales of cotton, and lesser amounts of oats, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, and apples. His livestock was valued at $300 and included 79 poultry, 15 swine, 25 cattle, and 7 sheep. The farm operation was small and was secondary to the operation of the store.

The Swindell Store quickly outgrew its first home. The present store building was constructed about 1890 while the original building, which later burned, reverted to its original use as a barn. The store was a classic rural general store, offering its customers a wide variety of goods: "dry goods, notions, hats, caps, boots, shoes, and country produce." Much of the store's business was barter with "chickens, eggs, corn, field peas, and ashes" used to settle accounts. The community's first post office, called Swindell, opened in the store around 1900. The first postmaster was Wilhemina Swindell, daughter of Albin Swindell.

In 1903, the Swindell House was expanded by the addition of a second story. Outbuildings, including a barn and a pumphouse, were also added about this time.

Albin and Cora Swindell had nine children. In the early part of the twentieth century, two sons became partners in the store. Albin B. Swindell, III (born 1880) joined the store in 1906, at which time it became known as A. B. Swindell and Son. In 1911, son John Harold (Harry) Swindell (1889-1979) became a partner. This was the same year as his marriage to Mary Atkinson (1887-1959), daughter of Robert Atkinson, a lumberman and surveyor, and Lucinda Luce Atkinson.

Albin Swindell died in 1919. His store continued under the operation of Harry Swindell. Harry and Mary Swindell and their three children came to be the occupants of the Swindell house. Like his father, Harry Swindell was a Hyde County civic leader. At various times, he served as a county commissioner, chairman of the county Board of Education, and county registrar. He was a delegate to the National Democratic Convention in 1928 and was active in the Methodist Church. His wife was a school teacher and a leader in a number of community women's groups.
CRITERIA EXCEPTIONS:

B. The Swindell Store was moved back several feet from US 264 when that highway was widened about 1920. This move was necessary to save the structure. The general relation of the store to the other buildings at the site and to the highway was retained and over the past sixty years the structure has attained integrity of site. The architectural integrity of the store was not impaired.
The Swindell Store underwent a few changes in the 1920s. In 1923, electricity was introduced to Hyde County and the store became the first store in the county to be supplied with electric power. Later in the 1920s, the store was moved back a short distance from the highway when the highway was widened.

The Swindell Store survived the Great Depression with difficulty. Customers were unable to pay off obligations and the business was forced to survive four bank closings in Hyde and surrounding counties.

In 1975, A. B. Swindell & Son celebrated its 100th anniversary. The store closed in 1978. Harry Swindell died the next year. He willed his house to his daughter, Mary-Louise Swindell McGee, who continues to live there.

Hyde County has always been a sparsely populated rural county. Along with schools and churches, stores like A. B. Swindell & Son served as centers of their communities. A general store like Swindell's sold food, clothing, appliances, medical supplies and drugs, farming and fishing supplies, and numerous other types of merchandise. Bills were sometimes paid in cash but often in barter. Thus, the store was a distribution point for the entire area. Mail was distributed in the building for a time and the rare telephone in operation at the site was used by many nearby residents. Other businesses, such as mills and a blacksmith shop, were located in close proximity to the store. The business was, for many years, the traditional place in the county to follow election returns. It was a convenient stop-over point for travelers into Swan Quarter, a convenient place for residents to meet, and a convenient location for the dissemination of news. The Swindell Store and the associated house, thus, have considerable local historical significance to their community and county.

Hyde County History: A Hyde County Bicentennial Project (Charlotte: Herb Eaton, Inc., for the Hyde County Historical Society, 1976), part 5, pp. 82-83, hereinafter cited as Hyde County History; Hyde County Deed Book 13, p. 372; Book 14, p. 357; Hyde County Marriage Register.


Hyde County History, Section 5, p. 83.

Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, Hyde County, North Carolina, Population Schedule; Hyde County History, 82-84; information supplied by Mary-Louise Swindell McGee, the owner of the property.

Hyde County History, 83-84; information supplied by Mrs. McGee; Hyde County Will Book 12, p. 218.

Hyde County History, 83-84.

Hyde County History, 83-85.

Hyde County History, 83-85; information supplied by Mrs. McGee.
see continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 207.77 acres
Quadrangle name Swanquarter
Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A
Zone Easting Northing
1 8 3 1 2 12 7 16 10
B
Zone Easting Northing
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Zone Easting Northing
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D
Zone Easting Northing
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E
Zone Easting Northing
F
Zone Easting Northing
G
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal boundary description and justification The property being nominated was purchased by Swindel in 1877 and has remained in the family since that time. The open fields and woodlands retain the rural setting in which the store and house have been situated since they were built. The property is shown on the enclosed plat map outlined in red.

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

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11. Form Prepared By

Statement of significance and criteria assessment by Davyd Foard Hood; historical name/title research report by Jim Sumner; architectural description by Cindy Craig, consultant
organization Survey and Planning Branch
date February 82, 1986
street & number 109 E. Jones Street
telephone (919)733-6545

city or town Raleigh
state N. C. 27611

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national 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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title State Historic Preservation Officer
date July 10, 1986

For NPS use only
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
derate

Keeper of the National Register

Chief of Registration
BIBLIOGRAPHY


McGee, Mary-Louise. Information supplied by.
