NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries ~ complete applicable sections)

1. NAME

COMMON:
Dempsey Wood House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
North side of S. R. 132; 2.5 miles from junction with S. R. 1336

CITY OR TOWN:
Kinston (First Congressional District)

STATE:
North Carolina

COUNTY:
Lenoir

CODE:
37

CODE:
107

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

(District) [ ] Building [ ] Site
[ ] Structure [ ] Object

OWNERSHIP

[ ] Public [ ] Private [ ] Both

Public Acquisition:
[ ] In Process [ ] Being Considered

STATUS

[ ] Occupied [ ] Unoccupied [ ] Preservation work in progress

ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
[ ] Yes: [ ] Restricted [ ] Unrestricted
[ ] No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

[ ] Agricultural [ ] Government [ ] Park
[ ] Commercial [ ] Industrial [ ] Private Residence
[ ] Educational [ ] Military [ ] Religious
[ ] Entertainmen [ ] Museum [ ] Scientific

[ ] Transportation
[ ] Other (Specify)

[ ] Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Will Emerson

STREET AND NUMBER:
Route 2

CITY OR TOWN:
La Grange

STATE:
North Carolina

CODE:
37

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:

Lenoir County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
Queen Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Kinston

STATE:
North Carolina

CODE:
37

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:

[ ] Federal [ ] State [ ] County [ ] Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

CODE:
The Dempsey Wood House is a two-story frame dwelling with a low hip roof. It rests on brick piers. Protecting the central bay of the three-bay front (south) facade is a two-tiered porch. It features two square pillars with molded caps and corresponding paneled pilasters. The upper level is enclosed by a well-turned balustrade. The central entrance is framed by two pairs of attenuated paneled pilasters which support a diminutive entablature adorned with tiny ornamental brackets. The door is flanked by multi-paned sidelights and surmounted by a narrow nine-light transom.

The four-bay east and west sides are dominated by pairs of massive step-shouldered common bond chimneys with split shafts. Those on the west side contain narrow recessed panels with a triangular motif. These curious chimneys are reminiscent of the multiple-stack chimneys of the seventeenth century, and are the only ones of this type known in North Carolina. At each corner are massive posts which take the form of paneled pilasters with cornice capitals. The north facade is similar to the front. The central entrance consists of double doors flanked by pairs of pilasters between which occur multi-paned sidelights. The pilasters support a shallow triangular pediment.

Most of the windows on the north and south facades contain their original six-over-six sash. The windows on the sides are quite narrow and have four-over-four sash. All windows feature molded architraves and shallow triangular pediments. Paneled aprons directly below the windows emphasize the verticality of the overall design.

On the interior the Dempsey Wood House has a center-hall plan two rooms in depth. The stair, rising from the right side of the hall, has an exceptionally heavy newel post and a handrail octagonal in section. Each room contains an unusual mantel featuring flat panels and wide applied moldings below a massive cornice shelf. The walls are finished with plaster above a vertically sheathed wainscot, and all doors and windows are framed with molded architraves with paneled cornerblocks.
In 1836 James Wood acquired from his father a plantation in the Falling Creek area of Lenoir County. Before 1850 he had begun building a house on the property. Construction of the house proceeded slowly until it was halted by the coming of the Civil War. By that time the house must have been virtually complete, since the Wood family had been living there for some time.

Dempsey and Jesse Wood, sons of James Wood, remained in the house until the property they owned was divided in 1892. It is from James's son, Dempsey, that the house takes its name. After the Wood property was divided, the house was purchased by N. J. Rouse. It passed through several hands before being purchased by Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Emerson in 1945. The Emersons are the present owners of the house.

The Dempsey Wood House is an important example of the transition from the pure Greek Revival to the more elaborate Victorian eclecticism which was becoming popular, just before the Civil War. This curious structure is one of the few houses left which clearly exhibits this change in mid-nineteenth century taste.
### Major Bibliographical References

- Lenoir County Records, State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina. (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).

### Geographical Data

#### Latitude and Longitude Coordinates Defining a Rectangle Locating the Property

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corner</th>
<th>Latitude</th>
<th>Longitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Approximate Acreage of Nominated Property:

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Form Prepared By

- Survey and Planning Unit Staff, John B. Wells, III, Supervisor
- Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
- 109 East Jones Street
- Raleigh, North Carolina

### State Liaison Officer Certification

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National [ ]  State [x]  Local [ ]

- Name: H. B. Jones
- Title: Director, State Department of Archives and History
- Date: April 16, 1971

### National Register Verification

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

- Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
- Date: 
- Attest: Keeper of the National Register
- Date: 