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: Dr. Massell Brantley House

2. Location

Street & number: 501 Branch Street
City, town: Spring Hope

3. Classification

<table>
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<td>In process</td>
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<td>Industrial</td>
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4. Owner of Property

Name: Allen C. and Mabel D. Barbee
Street & number: 501 Branch Street
City, town: Spring Hope

5. Location of Legal Description

Courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.: Nash County Courthouse
Street & number: Washington Street
City, town: Nashville
State: N.C.

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Title: Inventory of Historic Structures of Nash County, 1984-1985
Has this property been determined eligible? yes no
Date: 1984-1985
Federal: ___ state: ___ county: ___ local: ___

Depository for survey records: N.C. Division of Archives and History
City, town: Raleigh
State: N.C.
Located along Spring Hope's finest residential street, the imposing pillared Dr. Hassell Brantley House graphically symbolizes the prominent social status of its original occupant. The property fronts Branch Street, an east-west, oak embowered avenue where many of this small town's turn-of-the-century merchants and professionals erected their homes. The house faces southeast, approximately one hundred-forty feet back from the street on a spacious one-acre lot. It is the easternmost of three grand residences in a row that are all situated a similar distance from the street. Their front lawns, shaded by a canopy of oaks, magnolias, and dogwoods, join to create a verdant, park-like setting that establishes the aesthetic tone for the entire block.

Erected about 1912, the Dr. Hassell Brantley House exemplifies the Neo-Classical Revival style as it appeared in North Carolina in the early twentieth century. No records survive concerning the construction of the house, but the dwelling closely resembles the work of John C. Stout of Rocky Mount (twenty miles east of Spring Hope). Rocky Mount's foremost architect-builder of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Stout designed a host of prominent houses in the Neo-Classical Revival mode in that city and throughout eastern North Carolina. He built the Bissette-Cooley House, 1911, in nearby Nashville, North Carolina, a residence which displays a similar full-height pedimented portico supported by colossal Doric columns, that overlaps a wrap-around porch. Photographs of several other Neo-Classical houses credited to Stout are illustrated in a 1911 promotional publication of Rocky Mount. Each of these distinguished residences features a similar porch configuration.

The frame residence rests on a brick basement and has a two story, double pile, central hall plan; two story gable roofed wings extend from either side of the five-bay main block. A one story kitchen wing with a hip roof projects from the rear façade. It originally led into a one story porch, that was accessible from the central hall and enclosed in the 1950s.

The symmetrical front façade features one-over-one sash with plain lintels and simple moldings. Original louvered blinds, painted black, also remain. Wide vertical corner boards accent the corners of the main block and molded box cornices and a simple frieze beneath deep eaves further characterize the exterior. Interior end chimneys with corbelled stacks rise above the hip roof, that is topped by a deck.

The front façade is dominated by the full-height pedimented portico, fully developed in the Neo-Classical mode, and a wrap-around porch. This dual level porch type represents a design innovation of the Neo-Classical Revival and distinguishes the finest examples of the style in the area. The portico is supported by wooden Ionic columns grouped in threes at the outer corners, and includes Ionic pilasters that flank the main entrance. Dentils embellish the cornice of the entablature.
as well as the raking cornice. The pediment encloses a lunette. The deep wrap-around porch is also supported by Ionic columns and includes a lathe-turned balustrade which extends from the glazed sunroom on the west side to the porte-cochere on the east. Above the entry is a small deck lodged between the columns of the portico. The deck is bordered by a simple match-stick railing. Wide leaded-glass sidelights flank the main entrance, that is capped by a tripartite leaded-glass transom. The handsome mahogany door features an expansive, three-quarter length pane of bevelled glass.

The entrance leads to a spacious central hall with two principal rooms on either side. On the left is a parlor and dining room; a second parlor and bedroom are on the right. It is said that Dr. Brantley used the present bedroom as his home office and the right parlor for a waiting room. An open-string staircase rises in three flights to the rear and is the hall's principal feature. Newels on the main floor and on each landing are strong rectangular forms with square caps and bases, and simply treated with a single molding at the center. Their clean lines and decorative restraint are reflected in the stairway's slender rectangular balusters, as well as in the simple door and window surrounds that mark the interior. Wide mahogany pocket doors lead from the hall to the twin parlors.

The mantels in these room are identical. Fluted Ionic colonettes support full dentilled entablatures, and a delicate egg-and-dart motif embellishes each cornice beneath the mantel shelf. The dining room mantel is especially noteworthy. It consists of fluted Doric colonettes and heavy Doric entablature, including the full complement of triglyphs, metopes, and guttae. A simpler version of this mantel stands in the bedroom across the hall. The dining room is further distinguished by six-foot high wainscot consisting of two vertical ranges of recessed panels capped by molding cut in a deep profile. Two rows of exposed square beams intersect across the dining room ceiling.

The second story of the house has seven rooms arranged around a central hall plan similar to that on the first floor. Along the northwest wall of the hallway, an open-string stair ascends in one flight to the attic. Mantels with Neo-Classical detail, simpler than those on the first floor and each different, are intact in the four principal bedrooms.

Both floors retain original bronze and brass light fixtures and doors with two square panels and original cut-glass doorknobs. Slender picture moldings surround each room about three feet below the ceiling. The dwelling's eight fireplaces are partly enclosed by original glazed tile and retain brass covers in decorative designs.

In addition to the house, the site includes a frame one-room playhouse—a converted smokehouse—and a frame two-car garage. The
garage replaced a barn that had burned in the late 1850s. A one story, two room frame servant's dwelling behind the barn was razed in the fire as well. Originally, according to the 1923 Sanborn Map of Spring Hope, this structure stood a short distance behind the house where the patio is today. Eight-foot high brick columns define the two main entranceways to the house. These columns, painted white, contribute to the classical formality and dignity of the residence.

In total, the Dr. Hassell Brantley property includes two contributing structures, the Brantley House and the former smokehouse.
8. Significance

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Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Dr. Hassell Brantley House epitomizes the Neo- Classical Revival style of early twentieth-century North Carolina. The imposing white-columned design is attributed to John C. Stout, Rocky Mount's preeminent architect of this period. Built about 1912, the house also represents Spring Hope's era of railroad-related prosperity. A great number of the town's finest homes were built between 1900 and 1915, including four handsome Neo-Classical Revival residences. As Dr. Brantley's second spacious house in Spring Hope (his first, a striking Italianate-Queen Anne dwelling, is located next door to the west), it vividly illustrates the role of the Neo-Classical style as a graphic symbol of high social status. Dr. Brantley was the Spring Hope vicinity's most important physician and a leading citizen for over half a century. He held the post of County Physician, and served as a town commissioner in Spring Hope. Today, the Dr. Hassell Brantley House remains a symbol of prominent social status, for it is owned by Allen C. Barbee, a leading Spring Hope businessman and North Carolina State Representative.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

B. The Dr. Hassell Brantley House is associated with its builder, one of Spring Hope's principal physicians and leading citizens for over half a century.

C. A handsome example of the early Neo-Classical Revival style in North Carolina, the Dr. Hassell Brantley House is attributed to John C. Stout, a major Rocky Mount architect during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Dr. Hassell Brantley House is a Spring Hope landmark and architectural symbol of this railroad town's early twentieth-century expansion. It was erected by Dr. Hassell Brantley, an important physician and active citizen in Spring Hope during the community's early years of expansion.

Spring Hope neatly represents North Carolina's small railroad towns that developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Founded in 1888 on a spur line of the Wilmington-Weldon Railroad, the town progressed as a farming service center and a vital shipping point for local crops, especially cotton. A local history of Spring Hope published in 1935 declared that the community was the largest inland cotton market in North Carolina in 1910. The Sanborn Map of Spring Hope executed in 1911 depicts
an eighty-foot cotton platform east of the railroad depot and a cotton
seed oil gin to the west. The map also shows a wagon shop and three
tobacco warehouses standing near the tracks west of the business
district. The large Montgomery Lumber Company stood to the north.
Main Street by 1911 was a continuous block of brick commercial buildings
running parallel to the railroad tracks. Surrounding the business
district, the residential neighborhoods rapidly expanded between 1900
and the First World War. Particularly along Nash, Ash, Walnut, and
Branch streets, handsome one and two story frame houses appeared. The
1923 Sanborn illustrates an established railroad town boasting a
stable population of 1290.

During the early years of vigorous growth, and continuing until
shortly before his death in 1948, Dr. Hassell Brantley practiced
medicine in Spring Hope and the surrounding rural communities. He was
born in 1867, the son of Green B. and Rebecca (Ballentine) Brantley,
who operated a middle-sized farm near "Old Stanhope" in Nash County.
In 1873, the Brantleys acquired the Dr. N. B. Herring House along
the Raleigh-to-Tarboro stage route (NC 97) west of Stanhope. Hassell
Brantley was raised here, possibly attending the private Stanhope
Academy nearby. In 1888, Brantley graduated from Jefferson Medical
College in Philadelphia. In June of that year he married Nannie E.
Taylor who was also from Nash County (near Strickland's Crossroads).
Hassell and Nannie subsequently lived at the Brantley home in Stanhope
where, in 1890, their first son, Julian Chisholm, was born. However,
Hassell and his young family did not stay long in Stanhope, for
in 1891 they migrated west to Bucklin, Missouri. Reasons for the
move remain unclear, and may have concerned Nannie's physical health.
She died in Bucklin one year later, it is said in childbirth. The
child, who was their second, died as well.

Brantley and son Julian returned to Stanhope in 1892. In 1893,
he purchased for ninety dollars a one-acre tract along Branch Street
in Spring Hope and built his first house in town. This dwelling,
which still stands at 225 Branch, next door to the later Neo-Classical
Revival residence, is a two story frame house that is a blend of
Italianate and Queen Anne influences. Brantley and son occupied this
house with Brantley's new wife, Ida Westry, whom he had married in
February of 1894. Dr. Brantley doubled the size of his lot on Branch
Street as a result of one-half-acre acquisitions to the east in 1895
and 1900. This additional acre encompasses the house tract for the
Neo-Classical Revival residence that Brantley would construct over
a decade later.

While residing at 225 Branch Street, the Brantley family grew in
number. A daughter, Elsie, was born to Hassell and Ida in 1897, and
in 1898 a son, Dwight, was born. In 1908, Brantley acquired a tract
of land southwest of town and the family moved into a large frame
Queen Anne house that Brantley built there. However, it is said that
Ida was discontent with the isolation of country life, and so in 1911 the family moved once again into their home in Spring Hope. Their country home including four acres was sold in that year to W. H. Abernathy for $5,300. The Brantleys lived in the house at 225 Branch until their up-to-date Neo-Classical Revival house was completed to the east. They probably occupied their new home in 1912.

The elegant white-pillared houses was the home of Dr. Brantley until his death in 1948. While residing here he was engaged in a prosperous and multifarious medical practice, which included family medicine and a specialty in eye, ear, nose and throat. Dr. Brantley also fitted glasses. His downtown office was in the Finch Building at 127 Main Street, where he owned a drugstore and maintained an office downstairs to the rear. In 1919, he established a practice with his son Julian who was also a Jefferson Medical College graduate. Their offices were in the newly built Brantley Building at 111 Pine Street in Spring Hope. Julian's son, Julian C. Brantley II, and grandson, Julian C. III, also became physicians, thus making five generations of Brantley doctors.

Practicing medicine continuously in Spring Hope between 1893 and his death on August 27, 1984, Dr. Hassell Brantley played an active part in the community's development. A front-page obituary in the Nashville Graphic, the newspaper of the county seat, noted that Brantley had been "intimately connected with the growth of Spring Hope, having served as an official of the city government... and practiced medicine for 60 years." He was county physician for two years and served six years as a town commissioner in Spring Hope. But probably his greatest contribution to the community was as a physician. His grand residence vividly represented Brantley's status as the principal doctor in a prosperous small town. As a small-town doctor in the early twentieth century, Brantley had professional responsibilities that carried him into the countryside where his buggy, and later his motorcar, negotiated the narrow unpaved roads of the county. The Country Doctor Museum in Bailey, North Carolina contains a brass carriage lamp from Hassell Brantley's surrey.

Brantley willed his house to his daughter Elsie, who resided in South Carolina with her husband, Arthur Sledd. Brantley's wife, Ida, had died in 1947. The Sledd's sold the property to Allen C. and Mabel D. Barbee in December of 1949. The Barbees are the current owners and occupants.

Allen Barbee is an influential "self-made" businessman and North Carolina State Representative. His acquisition of the Dr. Hassell Brantley House illustrates the persistent role of the Neo-Classical Revival style as a symbol of high social status. Like the Brantleys, the Barbees are an old Nash County family. Allen Barbee's father, John Lucien Barbee, was a sawmill and cotton gin operator at Battleboro.
in Nash County before moving to Spring Hope. In Spring Hope he updated Webb's Mill (a water-powered grist mill still active on the Tar River) and is credited with building the three story portion in 1909. The J. L. Barbee House where Allen was raised is a single story frame dwelling on the east end of Railroad Street.

Before World War II Allen Barbee was a salesman for Herff-Jones Enterprises, nationwide distributor of scholastic caps and gowns. After the war Barbee continued with Herff-Jones, establishing the prosperous Allen Barbee Agency in Spring Hope. He also became active in community affairs, starting the Spring Hope Enterprise, the local newspaper, in 1947, and serving as mayor of the town. His interest and acumen in public affairs culminated in his election to the North Carolina House of Representatives in 1961. Barbee has served in the legislature ever since, holding the influential position of Speaker Pro Tempore for two terms. He also is active in local real estate, and in the 1970s helped to develop the attractive Peachtree Hills subdivision north of Spring Hope.

NOTES

1 Rocky Mount, the consolidation of two publications from the Rocky Mount Record in 1906 and 1911. See pages 37, 39, 41, 52. Also see, Claudia Roberts Brown, "National Register Nomination for Bissette-Cooley House," Raleigh, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1985. A brief review of John C. Stout's work in Rocky Mount can be found in Kate Mearns, Central City Historic Buildings Inventory, Rocky Mount, North Carolina (Raleigh: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1979). Another possible architect of the Dr. Hassell Brantley House was Rocky Mount architect H. S. Pool. Pool also designed houses in the Neo-Classical Revival style, though his work tended to be less accomplished than that credited to Stout. However, Pool is known to have worked in Spring Hope in the early twentieth century, designing the Romanesque Revival Spring Hope Baptist Church in 1909.

2 There are four handsome Neo-Classical Revival residences in Spring Hope, and each features a similar full-height pedimented portico that overlaps with a single story wrap-around veranda.

3 Interview with Mabel Barbee, current occupant of the Dr. Hassell Brantley House, November 3, 1985.

4 Mabel Barbee interview.


6 Constance Mathews, Stagecoach to Streamline (Spring Hope: Constance Mathews, 1935), 11.

8 Sanborn Map, "Spring Hope, 1923."

9 The Herring-Brantley House, ca. 1820, is included in the Tar-Neuse inventory of historic properties. Located along the historic Raleigh-to-Tarboro stage line, it is a hall-and-parlor frame dwelling with handsome Federal interior detail. See "Historic and Architectural Resources of the Tar-Neuse River Basin Appendix for Region L," (Raleigh: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1977, mimeographed), 16-10.

10 Events surrounding the Brantleys' migration west and the death of Nannie Brantley are not entirely known, and present explanations conflict. According to long-time Spring Hope resident and researcher of the Brantley family, Annie Pearl Brantley, Nannie may have been suffering from hydrophobia following a cat scratch. The Brantleys moved to Missouri for the healing powers of the mineral springs. Interview with Annie Pearl Brantley, November 12, 1985. However, also according to Annie Pearl Brantley, Hassell's son Julian (deceased) had maintained that his mother died in childbirth.

11 Nash County Register of Deeds (NCRD), Book 89, page 134.
12 Annie Pearl Brantley interview.
13 NCRD Book 97, page 9; and NCRD Book 120, page 132.
14 NCRD Book 162, page 570.
15 Annie Pearl Brantley interview.
16 NCRD Book 16, page 378.
17 Interview with Julian C. Brantley II in Rocky Mount, November 1, 1985.
18 Ibid.
19 Nashville Graphic (Nashville, North Carolina), September 2, 1948.
21 NCRD Book 528, pages 148-149. Dwight Brantley, Hassell's second son, inherited the house at 225 Branch Street, which had remained in Dr. Brantley's possession. See, NCRD Book 528, page 565.
23 NCRD Book 554, pages 296-297.
24 Annie Pearl Brantley interview. Mrs. Brantley has researched the history of many families in the Spring Hope vicinity, including the Barbees.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property: 1.02 a

Quadrangle name: Spring Hope, N.C.

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Nash County Tax Map n. 286018309323 (map 286018, block 30, parcel 9323)
The property for nomination is the house lot purchased by Dr. Brantley in one-half-acre acquisitions in 1895 and 1900, and on which he built his house.

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

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Richard Mattson, consultant

organization: N/A
date: February, 1986

street & number: Room 92 Courthouse

city or town: Nashville

state: N.C.

12. 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

State Historic Preservation Officer: [signature]
date: July 10, 1986

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:
date

Chief of Registration
**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**Books, Articles, Unpublished Materials**


Nashville Graphic, 2 January, 1948.

Rocky Mount. A consolidation of two publications put out by the Rocky Mount Record in 1906 and ca. 1911. In the vertical file of Braswell Memorial Library in Rocky Mount.

**Maps**


**Interviews**

The following individuals supplied valuable information concerning the Dr. Hassell Brantley House:

- Mrs. Mabel D. Barbee
- Mrs. Annie Pearl Brantley
- Mr. Julian C. Brantley II
Dr. Hassell Brantley House
301 Branch Street, Spring Hope

Spring Hope Quad  1:24000
Zone 17   760840 Easting
3981600 Northing