United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking “X” in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter “N/A” for “not applicable.” For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets
(Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>historic name</th>
<th>Richlands Historic District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>other names/site number</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2. Location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>street &amp; number</th>
<th>Majority of the historic downtown</th>
<th>N/A not for publication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>city, town</td>
<td>Richlands</td>
<td>N/A vicinity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>state</td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>code NC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>county</td>
<td>Onslow</td>
<td>code 133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zip code</td>
<td>28574</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

### 3. Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ownership of Property</th>
<th>Category of Property</th>
<th>Number of Resources within Property</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X private</td>
<td>building(s)</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X public-local</td>
<td>district</td>
<td>47 buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public-State</td>
<td>site</td>
<td>2 sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public-Federal</td>
<td>structure</td>
<td>6 structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>object</td>
<td>55 Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Name of related multiple property listing:  
Historic and Architectural Resources of Onslow County, NC

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets D does not meet the National Register criteria. D See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official  
Date  
2-5-90

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property X meets D does not meet the National Register criteria. D See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

X entered in the National Register.  
D determined eligible for the National Register.  
D determined not eligible for the National Register.

D removed from the National Register.

D other, (explain)______________________________

Signature of the Keeper  
Date of Action
6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling
Domestic: hotel
Commerce/Trade: specialty store, financial
Education: school
Religion: religious structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling
Domestic: multiple dwelling
Commerce/Trade: specialty store, financial
Religion: religious structure
Government: fire station

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

other: I house
other: late Victorian millwork
other: commercial

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation: brick
walls: brick
roof: metal
other: concrete block
asphalt

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

SUMMARY:

The forty-eight-acre Richlands Historic District incorporates most of the historic center of the town of Richlands. The district encompasses the principal commercial crossroads of Hargett and Wilmington streets as well as residential blocks along Foy, Franck, and Hargett streets. An early industrial quarter at the northwestern extremity of West Hargett Street is not included in the district, due to the fact that few buildings dating to the period of significance survive in the area.

The Richlands Historic District includes 145 buildings and structures. Ninety-two of these buildings and structures are contributing and fifty-three are noncontributing. Of the ninety-two contributing buildings and structures, forty-six are houses, twenty-two are commercial buildings, twenty-two are miscellaneous buildings (including three churches, outbuildings, etc.), and two are structures. Of the fifty-three noncontributing buildings and structures, sixteen are houses (of which three are trailers), nine are commercial buildings, twenty-two are miscellaneous buildings (largely sheds, detached garages, and other outbuildings), and six are structures. Of the primary domestic, commercial, and miscellaneous buildings in the district (exclusive of outbuildings), seventy-four percent are contributing.

Nearly all of the significant domestic and commercial structures in the district date to the period after the town's incorporation in 1880, although at least three pre-1880 dwellings have been incorporated into later buildings (see below). The district includes most of the two-story frame dwelling houses of Richlands' business and professional men. These houses are surrounded by well-kept yards and shaded by numerous mature deciduous trees.

DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE:

Richlands' late nineteenth and early twentieth century domestic architecture is essentially vernacular in character, with late Victorian decorative elements. The earlier houses during this period, such as the 1895 Cox House (Inventory List Number 125), tend to have the I house form with symmetrical two-story three-bay facades and center-hall plans. Only one house with the coastal plain cottage form has survived in the town: the early twentieth century Carter House (ON 197 - located outside the district). Relatively little housing associated with Richlands' laboring class survives in the central neighborhoods of the town. Numerous early twentieth century one-story three-bay frame houses survive in the town's two peripheral black neighborhoods on East Point Street and Dreadnaught Road, although many of these houses

[See continuation sheet]
have been abandoned and are in a state of disrepair. These neighborhoods are not located within the district.

After 1900 more complex house plans and profiles were adopted in Richlands. The 1908 Robert D. Thompson House (No. 85), the 1910 Del Barbee House (No. 71), and the 1915 Edwards-Cox House (No. 86) have bay windows, wraparound porches with turned and sawn work, and complex hip-roofed profiles. Unlike Swansboro, another of Onslow County's towns, Richlands did not develop a distinctive stylistic dialect. Ornamental features appearing on Richlands houses are not radically different from those appearing on contemporary houses in Jacksonville, the county seat, or on rural houses in Onslow County and neighboring counties. Richlands' late nineteenth and early twentieth century houses rarely exhibit any of the more sophisticated Victorian styles then current elsewhere in America, with the exception of the 1918 Isaac Koonce House (No. 129), which has an octagonal corner turret in the Queen Anne style (see Onslow County Multiple Property Documentation Form: Stylish dwellings. Victorian and Early Twentieth Century Styles).

Richlands domestic interiors of the period are similar to those observed elsewhere in the county (see Onslow County Multiple Documentation Form: Vernacular Dwellings. Interior Finishes). Walls and ceilings are generally finished in plaster or sheathed in beaded tongue-and-groove boards. Stair balustrades are often embellished with turned ornament, and mantels display pilastered surrounds, bracketed shelves, and engaged colonnettes.

Usually Richlands interiors were the product of local craftsmen; occasionally they appear to have been assembled of parts ordered from outside the area. One house with particularly elaborate interior treatments is the circa 1915 George Brooks House (No. 28) which has a stained-glass Palladian window over a stair landing, panelled newel posts on the stair, two-stage colonnetted mantels, and a passage between the entry hall and the front parlor flanked by Ionic columns on panelled plinths. The George Brooks House interior is of a sophistication unrivaled in the town, and may have been ordered in part or in whole from a catalogue or a builder's supply emporium. An interesting counterpoint to the George Brooks House interior is the interior of the 1914 Frantick House (No. 146), which also has a two-stage mantel and a framed passage, but with naive shaft-like columns and colonnettes that appear to be the work of a local craftsman.

Several Richlands houses are ascribed to local carpenter Benjamin "Mack" Findeisen (b. 1858). Findeisen is credited with the construction of the 1908 Daniel Webster Murrill House (No. 84) and the 1910 Del Barbee House (No. 71). During the 1920s Joseph W. Coston (b. 1902) served as Findeisen's apprentice. Joe Coston, with his brother Herman (b. 1899) and possibly other brothers, is credited with the construction or remodelling of a number of rural houses in the Richlands vicinity. The Costons are said to have owned a lathe which they used to turn the shaft-like classical porch columns and mantel colonnettes which are their trademark (Mrs. Fowler Manning, personal communication). Another Richlands builder was W. M. Barbee, listed in the 1916 North Carolina Year Book.

By the 1920s, house types and styles more representative of the American main-
Stream began to appear in Richlands. Several bungalows were built in the town, among them the 1931 Graham Cavanaugh House (ON 199 - located outside the district), which was also one of the first brick houses to be built in the county. By the 1930s, some Richlands business leaders were hiring architects to design their homes. Richlands banker and businessman Carl Whit Sutton (1882-1945) hired Kinston architect Mitchell Wooten to design his 1938 two-story brick Georgian Revival house on West Hargett Street (No. 26).

**COMMERCIAL ARCHITECTURE:**

Richlands's first-generation commercial buildings do not survive. These were one- and two-story frame structures built on North Wilmington Street between 1880 and 1910. A photograph of 1911 shows them to have been gable- and false-fronted structures, often with one- or two-story porches across the front (Brown: 338). During the early 1910s a fire destroyed the buildings on the west side of North Wilmington Street (and possibly also on the east side) and the town's merchants rebuilt in brick. Consequently, Richlands commercial district, centered on the intersection of Hargett and Wilmington streets, dates largely to the 1910s and 1920s, with narrow one-story mostly concrete-block commercial structures added from the 1930s to the 1950s. The largest commercial buildings of the 1930s, such as the 1936 Richlands Theater (No. 35) and the J. F. Mohn Building (No. 47) were built on West Hargett Street. Richlands's commercial architecture is similar to that built in Jacksonville during the same period (see Onslow County Multiple Documentation Form: Commercial Buildings. Stores).

One of the more outstanding commercial buildings in Richlands is the large two-story brick Richlands Supply Company Building (No. 36), built by Nathaniel Sylvester IV (1862-1923) in 1905. The first-floor sales space of the Richlands Supply Company Building has extensive original shelving with turned shelf supports and a ladder on rollers. Behind the building is a two-level metal-sheathed warehouse. One other store in Richlands, the 1911 M. B. Steed Store (No. 121), is comparable in size to the Richlands Supply Company Building. The Steed Store has original ornamental shelving and a freight elevator.

Two historic bank buildings survive in Richlands. The circa 1904 Peoples Bank
Building (No. 40) on West Hargett Street is a one-story brick structure indistinguishable from the commercial buildings around it. Much finer was the 1927 Bank of Richlands (No. 100) which stands at the heart of the downtown. The bank's original facade (concealed behind a modern facade) has giant order brick pilasters, decorative brick courses, and windows with decorative muntins. The Beaux Arts and Art Deco styling of the building is similar to that of Jacksonville's Bank of Onslow (ON 475; also included in the Historic and Architectural Resources of Onslow County, NC multiple property listing).

EDUCATIONAL AND RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS:

Richlands' 1907 two-story frame high school, which stood at the end of West Franck Street on Academy Street, has been demolished, but three buildings associated with it survive. They are the (Former) Richlands High School Annex (No. 21), which has been converted into a residence; the (Former) Richlands High School Industrial Arts Building (No. 15), a simple weatherboarded frame structure; and the (Former) Richlands High School Teacherage (No. 14), a one-story frame dwelling. All of these structures date to the first quarter of the twentieth century.

Three historic churches in the district have contributing status. They are the 1920s (Former) First Baptist Church (No. 54) of rusticated concrete-block construction with a battlemented corner entry tower; the 1934 First Christian Church (No. 61), an astylistic brick building that occupies the site of two earlier church buildings at the edge of the historic downtown; and the Georgian Revival style 1939 Richlands United Methodist Church (No. 148), fourth-generation successor to the 1813 log church at the heart of the downtown (see Onslow County Multiple Property Documentation Form: Religious and Educational Buildings).

Overall, the Richlands Historic District has good architectural integrity. Primary changes to houses are replacement modern sidings and porches, but for the most part houses with these changes continue to contribute to the district due to retention of original form, roofline, fenestration and ornament. Although most storefronts have been altered, the majority of the commercial buildings are intact in their upper elevations. Early commercial buildings that have been thoroughly covered with new materials are noncontributing.
Richlands Historic District, Onslow County

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RICHLANDS HISTORIC DISTRICT INVENTORY LIST

KEY:

The buildings in this inventory are usually named for their original owner or occupant, generally an individual, family, business, or institution (eg. Richlands Supply Company Building). Occasionally, when a building has been substantially remodelled during the period of significance, the name of the later owner or occupant is added to that of the original owner or occupant (eg. Miller-Venters House). For the lesser contributing buildings and modern non-contributing buildings the present name of the occupant (usually a business) or a generic title is used as the name of the building (eg. house). The 1987-1988 Onslow County Architectural Survey generated the majority of site histories paraphrased in the inventory list. The survey relied on local tradition with occasional corroborating archival and deed research (no Sanborn maps or other maps of the town dating to the period of significance survive). A secondary source was the historical markers posted on a number of the historic houses in the district, researched by long-time Richlands area residents A. K. R. Boggs and Ikey Brock. The site files for the architectural survey contain more complete architectural and historical discussions of the buildings in the district. These files are kept at the Survey and Planning Branch of the Division of Archives and History in Raleigh, with a second less-complete set at the Onslow County Museum (presently located in Richlands, NC). The inventory list is organized by street and blocks, beginning at the southwest corner of the district and proceeding more-or-less in an eastward clockwise fashion.
National Register Status:  
C = contributing  
N = noncontributing  

All buildings are of weatherboarded frame construction unless otherwise noted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List #</th>
<th>Street#</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Height</th>
<th>Comment/original owner - occupant(if known)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Franck Street (south side)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 1.</td>
<td>#101</td>
<td>ca.1925</td>
<td>1½</td>
<td><strong>Sylvester House;</strong> large bungalow with enlarged front porch, gable dormer, landscaped yard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N 2.</td>
<td>#101a</td>
<td>mid-20th c.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Garage and apartment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 3.</td>
<td>#105</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Richlands Community Center;</strong> WPA-built community building with rubble foundation, chimneys, and mantels. Location of the town's first public library.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 4.</td>
<td>#107</td>
<td>ca.1907</td>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Benjamin Franklin Brown House;</strong> three-bay house with heavily ornamented front stoop gable, other modern porch details, and ell. Irene Brown, daughter of B. F. Brown, was Onslow County's first public librarian.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N 5.</td>
<td>#107a</td>
<td>mid-20th c.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Shed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 6.</td>
<td>#107b</td>
<td>1930s</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Metal-sided barn, most recently an antique mart, now vacant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N 7.</td>
<td>#107c</td>
<td>late 20th c.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Trailer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Franck Street (north side)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 8.</td>
<td>#104</td>
<td>1907</td>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Clarence Mills House;</strong> side-hall plan house with front projection, decorative one-tier front porch and second-tier balcony. Mills was an Onslow County sheriff.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### South Academy Street (east side)

| ON 749  |
| C 9.    |
| #104a  |
| ca.1907 |
| 1      |

Rear kitchen of Mills House, now separate from house, with chamfered front porch posts.

| ON 722  |
| C 10.   |
| #106   |
| ca.1905 |
| 2      |

**Robert Lee Franck House;** imposing T-shaped house with a one-tier porch wrapping around a front projection, a central chimney, and original and modern detailing.

| N 11.  |
| #106a  |
| 1980s  |
| 1      |

Swimming pool under inflatable bubble shelter.

| N 12.  |
| #106b  |
| late 20th c. |
| 2      |

Concrete-block garage with apartment above.

| ON 723  |
| C 13.   |
| #108   |
| ca.1905 |
| 2      |

**Will Franck House;** asymmetrical center-hall plan house with one-story ell, reworked one-tier front porch, vinyl siding.

| ON 765  |
| C 14.   |
| #112   |
| 1910s  |
| 1      |

(Former) Richlands High School Teacherage; three-bay double-pile center-hall plan dwelling with ell, reworked front porch, aluminum siding. Residence of Richlands High School principal in 1920s and 1930s.

| ON 764  |
| C 15.   |
| #107   |
| 1910s  |
| 1      |

(Former) Richlands High School Industrial Arts Building; utilitarian one-room structure later used as garage, vacant. School bell on post.

| ON 764  |
| C 16.   |
| #107a  |
| ca.1907 |

**Guthrie Brown House;** house with shed-roofed front porch, one-story ell, aluminum siding.

| ON 769  |
| C 17.   |
| #105   |
| ca.1900 |
| 1½     |

Novelty-sided garage.

| ON 710  |
| C 18.   |
| #105a  |
| ca.1940 |
| 1      |

Trailer. Sits in vacant lot of demolished Aman House, with large oaks and boxwood hedges.

| ON 710  |
| N 19.   |
| #103   |
| 1980s  |
| 1      |

Brick pumphouse.
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Richlands Historic District, Onslow County

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South Academy Street
( west side)

ON 763 C 21.  #104  1910s  1½
(Former) Richlands High School Annex; large structure with multiple gables, front and rear additions. Building stood at northeast of first (1907) Richlands High School building.

N 22.  #102  mid-20th c.  1
House.

N 23.  #102a  mid-20th c.  1
Garage.

West Hargett Street
(south side)

ON 777 C 24.  #345  early 19th c.; ca. 1880  2
Humphrey-Koonce House; a two-story T-shaped house which incorporates a two-story, mortise-and-tenon frame house that belonged to the Humphrey family of Richlands. The house in its present state has a roof with multiple gables, a decorative wraparound porch, and a one-story ell.

ON 777 C 25.  #345a  1930s  1
Garage.

ON 777 C 26.  #243  1938  2
Carl Whit Sutton House 2; brick Georgian Revival modified side-hall plan house with refined exterior and interior woodwork semi-detached garage and apartment, landscaped yard. This house was the second built in Richlands by businessman and banker C. W. Sutton, and was designed by Kinston architect Mitchell Wooten.

ON 777 C 27.  #241  ca. 1900  1
Clarence Hill House; a Queen Anne Triple-A cottage with three-bay double-pile center-hall plan, ell, and decorative front porch.

ON 777 C 28.  #233  1910s  2
George Brooks House; four-square plan house with high pyramid roof, one-tier front porch, one-story rear wing.
Richlands Historic District, Onslow County

N 29. #233a mid-20th c. 1
Palladian window over stair, sophisticated interior detailing. Brooks operated a brickworks in 1907.

N 30. #233b 1980s 1
House with front porch, aluminum siding.

N 31. #233c mid-20th c. 2
Gazebo.

N 32. #203 mid-20th c. 1
Garage with apartment above.

C 33. #201 1939-40 1
Gable-fronted concrete block commercial building, now functioning as laundry.

C 34. #117 ca.1950 1
D & R Esso Service Station; concrete and stucco building with Mission Style and Art Deco styling, simulation tile roof, exterior lattice wall panels, two service bays and office, vacant but maintained. Standard Oil built this station using a design that appears throughout the Carolinas. Ray Brown leased the station from Standard Oil.

N 35. #115 1936 2
Mohn Store; concrete-block with green enamel facade, aluminum display windows, and metal awning, vacant; originally clothing store.

C 36. #113 1905 2
Richlands Theater; large utilitarian brick structure, formerly with marquee, vacant. The theater was first owned and operated by Richard D. Sylvester.

C 37. #113a 1940 2
Richlands Supply Company Warehouse; metal-sided gable-fronted structure with side sheds, hoist boom.

Harry Pearson Store; brick commercial structure with aluminum display windows and fake mansard. Harry Pearson operated a dry goods store here in the 1920s.

Peoples Bank Building; brick commercial structure with aluminum display windows, decorative parapet. From 1910 to 1912 the building served as Wayne Brinson Venter's Peoples Bank. During 1920s it served as Dr. Carl Whit Sutton's office.

Carl Whit Sutton Automobile Showroom; brick commercial structure with segmentally-arched front windows, large rear windows. Dr. Sutton (whose office was in an adjacent building) owned the Ford dealership which operated out of this building in the 1920s.

Paul Marshburn Barber Shop; brick commercial building with wood and aluminum front. The building was first owned by Marshburn.

Ed Franck Building; utilitarian brick commercial block with modernized shop fronts. Franck operated his general store in the building in the 1910s and 1920s, while E. L. Cox operated the town's telephone office in the second story during the same period.

Wayne Brinson Venter's Building; brick double store building with aluminum display windows, date blocks in parapets.
Richlands Historic District, Onslow County

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Cox Hotel; rambling composite structure which incorporates the late nineteenth century Wallace House, with full-facade one-tier porch, rear wing. The hotel appears as the "Cox House" in business directories of the 1910s.

Concrete-block garage with storage room above, in ruinous condition.

J. F. Mohn Building; large brick commercial building with asymmetrical two-store division, aluminum display windows, original interiors, one-story metal-sheathed rear addition, vacant. The building formerly housed Mohn's Furniture Store and Grocery.

Agricultural products storage tank.

Paul Humphrey Sr. Service Station; unusual station/dwelling with drive-through (now enclosed) engaged under upper-story porch and living space, hipped roof, concrete-block side shed additions and rear addition. Humphrey ran an auto parts store in the first story and lived upstairs during the second quarter of the twentieth century.

Prefabricated metal Butler "Farmstead" equipment shed.

Mittie and Agnes Venters House; double-pile house with decorative front porch, ell. The house was built by Gum Branch farmer George R. Venters for his unmarried sisters.

C. A. Winberry House; three-bay two-room plan I-house with shed-roofed front porch, two-story ell (1906), back porches. Winberry was a merchant.
Brooks House; aluminum-sided house with projecting front room, front porch, formerly semi-detached rear kitchen.

(Former) First Baptist Church; rusticated concrete-block church with battlemented corner entry tower, stained glass, large rear Sunday school addition.

John Franklin Cox House; two-story front entry wing with two-story bay window, one-story decorative wraparound porch, one-story ell with porches, aluminum siding; Cox operated a livery stable.

Metal-sided garage.

Abandoned trailer at rear of lot.

Humphrey-Deford House; three-bay double-pile center-hall plan dwelling with pinwheel designs in front and side gables, decorative side porch, ell with modern carport at end. The Defords had acquired this house by the 1920s.

House; gable-roofed; asbestos shingles.

Johnson's Funeral House; a large utilitarian aluminum-sided structure incorporating a one-story 1920s bungalow.

First Christian Church; brick five-bay nave-plan church with side and rear additions, rear Sunday School court. The church replaces 1883 and 1910 structures on same site. A 1954 parsonage stands adjacent (outside district).

Scout Building; brick building.

First Christian Church picnic ground
with picnic shelter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street Name</th>
<th>House Number</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Type Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Church Street</td>
<td>#121</td>
<td>ca. 1915</td>
<td>Cox-Marshburn House; three-bay two-room plan house with reworked ell, aluminum siding. A Cox built this house. Wallace Marshburn owned it in the 1920s. The house may also have served as the Baptist parsonage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Academy Street</td>
<td>#102</td>
<td>ca. 1940</td>
<td>Dave Taylor House; irregular plan, front porch, rear shed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Academy Street</td>
<td>#104</td>
<td>ca. 1960</td>
<td>Concrete-block house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Foy Street</td>
<td>#205</td>
<td>ca. 1950</td>
<td>Brick house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lumber Shed</td>
<td>#203</td>
<td>late 20th c.</td>
<td>Aluminum-sided house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Del Barbee House</td>
<td>#107</td>
<td>ca. 1910</td>
<td>Del Barbee House; complex hipped roof-line, decorative wraparound porch, bay window, pressed metal in gables, landscaped yard. Barbee was a mail carrier. Carpenters Findeisen and Coston built the house.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Board-and-batten smokehouse with antlers nailed to gable, side shed.

Small garage which formerly stood on street, now in back of house.

House with hipped roof with front shed dormer, hip-roofed front porch and ell, double-pile two-room plan.

J. F. Mohn House; brick Tudor Revival house with gabled vestibule flanked by chimney, false half-timbering and stucco in front gable, side and back porches. J. F. Mohn was a prominent local businessman and state representative.

Concrete-block garage with asbestos-sided apartment above.

A. Z. Jarman House; three-bay double-pile center-hall plan house with large front gable, engaged decorative front porch, ell, side room built for consumptive child of Jarman's.

House with projecting front room, re-worked front porch, side addition, aluminum siding.

Garage.

Aluminum-sided house.

Buck Howard House; I-house with projecting two-story center bay, decorative front porch, brick gable end chimneys, one-story ell. Howard was a Richlands post master and teacher.
ON 784 C 83.  #116  ca.1906  1½

Branch Daugherty House; house with unusual plan, layered front gables, decorative front porch, hip-roofed ell, formerly semi-detached hip-roofed rear wing.

ON 785 C 84.  #118  1908  2

Daniel Webster Murrill House; side-hall plan house with decorative front porch, sunburst design in front gable, hip-roofed ell. Murrill was a Gregory Forks area farmer who moved to town so that his daughters could attend the newly-opened Richlands High School.

ON 785 C 85.  #220  1908  2

Robert D. Thompson House; one of Richlands' more elaborate late Victorian dwellings, with a four-square plan, decorative wraparound porch, two-story bay windows, decorative interior. Thompson, like his neighbor D. W. Murrill, moved to Richlands so that his daughters could attend Richlands High School.

ON 786 C 86.  #222  1915  1

Edwards-Cox House; a Queen Anne cottage with a double-pile center-hall plan, several bay windows, a decorative wraparound porch, and an ell. Built by Dave Edwards, the house was long owned by the Cox family.

ON 786 C 87.  #224  ca.1915  1

Roy Frazelle House; three-bay double-pile center-hall plan house with front porch, hip-roofed dormer, ell, asbestos siding.

ON 786 C 88.  #224a  1980s  1

Workshop.

ON 786 C 89.  #226  1920  1½

Joe Rhem Taylor House; bungalow with engaged front porch, gabled dormers, side and rear wings, aluminum siding.

ON 786 C 90.  #226½  1930s  2

Novelty-sided rental or guest house with exterior stair.
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<td>Rand House;</td>
<td>1½ three-bay double-pile Bungalow with engaged front porch with Classical</td>
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<td>Bungalow</td>
<td>columns, side bay window, shed-roofed dormers, aluminum siding.</td>
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<td>Brick furnace</td>
<td>1 Brick furnace house.</td>
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<td>Long agricultural shed.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Concrete-block smokehouse.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Shed.</td>
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<td>Garage with apartment above, brick</td>
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<td>Garage with apartment above, brick foundation, exterior stair.</td>
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<td>C 98.</td>
<td>1930s</td>
<td>Bank of Richlands; brick commercial structure with modern exterior added</td>
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Nathaniel Sylvester IV House; Nathaniel Sylvester III built the original section of this house - a two-story, possibly hall parlor plan dwelling with Greek Revival interior detailing. Nathaniel III's son, Nathaniel IV, expanded the house in the late nineteenth century, giving it an asymmetrical center-hall plan, decorative two-tier front porch, bay window, and a formerly semi-detached one-story kitchen and dining room ell. Later a car port and aluminum siding were added. Nathaniel IV owned the Richlands Supply Company.
W. B. Venters was president of the bank, which operated as the First Citizens Bank from the 1930s to the 1960s.

**Commercial Building**; brick with decorative parapet, aluminum display windows.

**Clarence Hill Building**; brick commercial building with aluminum display windows.

**Commercial Building**; concrete-block commercial building with structural glass and aluminum facade. The building was occupied by a grocery during the 1950s.

**Onslow Insurance and Realty Company Building**; concrete-block commercial building with wood and aluminum facade.

**(Former) Richlands Post Office**; brick commercial building with stepped front and side parapets, aluminum display windows. Post office was replaced circa 1959 by the present post office on South Wilmington Street.

**Richlands Volunteer Fire Department**; large concrete-block structure with brick veneer, and a large parking lot.

**Metal-sided garage.**

**Richlands Park**; includes gazebo, playground, basketball courts (on West Foy Street).

**H-S Artifact Shop**; brick commercial structure.
Carl Whit Sutton House; large house with hipped roof, two-story bay windows, one-tier wraparound porch with Classical columns, back porch; first house of Rich­lands businessman and banker C. W. Sutton.

Smokehouse with front gable overhang.

Hip-roofed brick garage converted into apartment, with car port.

Miller-Venters House; large three-bay double-pile center-hall plan house, formerly with decorative two-tier front porch, later replaced with Doric columns, aluminum sided. The house was built by saw and grist-mill owner and merchant J. M. Miller, and operated as the Hardy Hotel during the early twentieth century. Later the house was owned and remodelled by Victor Venters.

Concrete-block two-car garage.

Extensive brick wall with iron fencing and gate.

Victor Venter's Office; brick commercial building with decorative parapet, aluminum display windows. Venters operated his farm loan business here.

J. E. Brown Store; brick commercial building with rear metal-sided shed, modern store front. Brown operated his general store here.

C. A. Winberrry Building; brick double­store with decorative parapet with date block, modern store fronts. The building originally housed a grocery and a restaurant.

Commercial Building; brick with decorative
parapet and scored concrete arches over front porch entry and display window.

**Venters-Thompson Building;** large brick double-store, one early store front with metal columns, other store front reworked, freight elevator inside. W. B. Venters and R. D. Thompson (banking partners) built this building. Thompson owned the grocery in the north half.

**M. B. Steed Store;** large brick commercial building with original store front, decorative shelving and stair, freight elevator on interior. Steed originally operated a large frame store on the other side of the street.

Concrete-block building with large display windows.

**Venters-Marshburn House;** gable-fronted Bungalow with engaged front porch, bracketed eaves. Built by Harry Venters, barber Paul Marshburn bought the house in 1943.

Frame and concrete-block shed.

**Cox House;** I-house with triple-A roof, decorative one-tier front porch, two-story ell with enclosed two-tier porch.

**Venters House;** hip-roofed with extensive decorative wraparound porch, ell aluminum siding; built by Wayne B. Venters.
### Isaac Koonce House;
Two-story bay-window topped by turret is the prominent feature of this Queen Anne style house, which also has a one-tier wrap-around porch, one-story rear wing and addition.

### Shed.

### Office;
One-room gable-front structure with barred windows. This structure may have served as the office for the early twentieth century Banks Sawmill in Richlands before being moved to the site during the mid-twentieth century. In keeping with area outbuildings of the era

### Edward Mills House;
Three-bay center-hall plan with one-tier front porch, triple-A roof, one-story ell, aluminum siding.

Two-level pack house. The structure may have been used temporarily as gymnasium for the (second) Richlands High School during the 1940s.

### Brock House;
Asymmetrical center-hall plan, one-tier decorative front porch, formerly semi-detached rear kitchen and dining room, aluminum siding.

### Robert Thompson House;
Bungalow with bracketed eaves, engaged front porch, side additions. Thompson was a clerk with the Dover and Southbound Railroad and also worked for the Bank of Richlands.

### Workshop.

### Roy Cox House;
Complex hipped-roof, decorative wraparound porch, bay window, ell.

### Vertical-board sheathed smokehouse in ruinous condition.

Richard Sylvester House: Georgian Revival brick house with side wings, front entry with broken pediment, back porch. Sylvester owned a chain of theaters in Onslow County, including the Richlands Theater.

Cox House: four-square plan house with complex hipped roof, two-story bay windows, wraparound porch, one-story hip-roofed ell. The house was formerly the home of Hazel Cox.

Franck House: four-square plan house with gabled front setback, one-tier front porch, hip-roofed one-story ell, aluminum siding.

Richlands United Methodist Church: large watered-down Georgian Revival Style brick church with steeple, two-story addition. The present structure occupies the site of the first 1813 log church structure and may incorporate a late nineteenth century frame church structure.
8. **Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

- [ ] nationally
- [ ] statewide
- [x] locally

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

- [x] A
- [ ] B
- [ ] C
- [ ] D

**Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)**

- [ ] A
- [ ] B
- [ ] C
- [ ] D
- [ ] E
- [ ] F
- [ ] G

**Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)**

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**Cultural Affiliation**

- [ ] N/A

**Significant Person**

- [ ] N/A

**Architect/Builder**

- Findlesen, Benjamin
- Coston, Joseph

---

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Richlands Historic District is eligible for National Register listing under criteria A and C. The forty-eight-acre district comprises most of the historic commercial and residential areas of the town of Richlands, North Carolina, which functioned throughout its history as the commercial hub of northern Onslow County. Richlands' commercial importance began with the formation of the community in 1850 and accelerated during the early twentieth century with the coming of the Dover and Southbound Railroad and the establishment of Onslow County's first public high school in the town in 1907. Most of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century domestic and commercial structures associated with Richlands' development survive, as do several religious and educational structures. Richlands' domestic architecture displays a variety of styles and forms, ranging from traditional I houses to elaborate late Victorian houses, bungalows, and Georgian Revival houses. Richlands' commercial architecture is characterized by blocks of one- and two-story brick buildings, most with exterior architectural integrity and some with interior integrity. The period of significance for the Richlands Historic District extends from the circa 1860 date of construction of the town's earliest known building, the original section of the Nathaniel Sylvester House (Inventory List Number 99), until 1940.

The Richlands Historic District is eligible for the National Register under the criterion A, Community Development area of significance as the principal concentration of historic buildings associated with the locally important agricultural center of Richlands. Richlands and two other towns, Swansboro and Jacksonville, constitute the three principal historic centers associated with naval stores, lumber, and agricultural production in Onslow County. The district is architecturally significant (eligible under criterion C) because it contains examples of all five property types discussed in the Onslow County Multiple Property Documentation Form, but primarily the Vernacular Dwellings (Type 1), Stylish Dwellings (Type 2), and Commercial Buildings (Type 3) property types.

[ ] See continuation sheet
Historic Context and Background

Colonial records refer to the north central section of Onslow County as "the Richlands of the New River" (Ford). The well-drained sandy soils of the section were superior to those found elsewhere in the county, and by the early nineteenth century the Richlands area supported a number of large and diversified farms. The settled agricultural character of the section was atypical of the county, where the predominance of naval stores, livestock, and maritime activities depressed agricultural development and led to an exploitive tradition of land use (see Onslow County Multiple Property Documentation Form: Naval Stores and Lumber Production in Onslow County, 1734-1930; and Agriculture in Onslow County, 1734-1930). As agricultural development and rural population growth gained momentum in the Richlands area, the need for services and social institutions grew apace.

Early Development:

The site of Richlands is a level tongue of land, approximately twenty feet above sea level, between the wide bottoms of the upper New River and its branch, Squire's Run. The Wilmington and New Bern Road, a section of the colonial Boston to Charleston post road, crosses the town site in a southerly direction and corresponds to the present Wilmington Street. A secondary road, leading from Kinston in Lenoir County to the Onslow County seat at Jacksonville, crosses the site in a southeasterly direction and corresponds to Hargrett Street. The Richlands crossroads was chosen in 1813 as the site for the first Richlands Methodist Church building, a log structure originally known as the Oak Grove Church (Brown: 352). Later a school was built near the church (this school was referred to as "old" in a deed of 1852). By the late 1840s a store stood at the crossroads.

The potential for a town at the site became evident to Nathaniel Sylvester III (1798-1864), a prominent farmer who owned land at the crossroads. In 1850 Sylvester began selling one- and two-acre lots at the location. By 1859 the location was referred to in deeds as the "Village of Richlands." One source states that the embryonic town boasted "a church, two stores, a school building, gin and sawmill and probably five residents" by the early 1860s (Brown: 353). The school was the Richlands Academy, founded in 1848 by Leonard G. Woodward, which occupied an old schoolhouse until circa 1852 when a new two-room structure was built (Morris: 2. See also Onslow County Multiple Property Documentation Form: Religion and Education in Onslow County, 1734-1938. Academies). One of the few houses to survive from this period is Nathaniel Sylvester III's house, built about 1860 and incorporated into his son's late nineteenth century house on Wilmington Street (No. 99). Another house which may date to this period is the Wallace House, incorporated into the early twentieth century Cox Hotel (No. 45)(this house may have been modified in the late Victorian style in the late nineteenth century before its inclusion in
Richlands Historic District, Onslow County

Section number 8  Page 2

the Cox Hotel). One indication of Richlands's ante-bellum importance as a focal point of the surrounding countryside is given by James Battle Avirett, who described the coming of the circus to the "little hamlet of Upper Richlands" in the 1850s in his book The Old Plantation: "It would appear as though the whole of the upper part of Onslow and the lower part of Jones counties were here to-day" (page 113).

Richlands grew very little during the immediate post-war period. Only one store is known to have operated in the town, that of J. K. Miller. Miller also operated a steam-powered corn and saw mill during the same period. (Branson, 1872: 176; 1878: 228).

INCORPORATION AND LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY GROWTH:

Richlands did not seek formal incorporation from the North Carolina legislature until 1880, when on March 29 a one-mile square centered on the Methodist church was designated the town of Richlands (Brown: 353). L. W. Hargett, Uzza Mills, S. J. Veach, F. D. Koonce, and M. B. Steed were named as town officers. McKenzie Bradford Steed (1846-1917) became one of the town's leading merchants in the late nineteenth century.

Growth during the 1880s was modest. By the end of the decade the town's population numbered only 90 (U.S. Census). One source notes that the town had four stores in 1880 (Brown: 353). By 1884 the town had added another store to its incipient commercial district on North Wilmington Street (Branson, 1884: 503). By 1896 the population of the town had grown to 150 - still well below the population of the county seat at Jacksonville, with 450 inhabitants, and Swansboro, with 300 inhabitants (Branson, 1896: 464).

The 1880s and 1890s witnessed the organization of several Protestant congregations in the town. The congregation of Richlands's First Baptist Church organized in 1880 and built its first meeting house - Emma's Chapel - on the northeastern outskirts of town in 1882 (Barbee: n.p.). The congregation of the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) organized in 1882 and built a sizable frame church on the northwestern outskirts of town in 1883 (Jones and Rickett: 17). A Presbyterian congregation had formed in the town by the mid-1890s (Branson, 1896: 465). All together, four congregations, including the pre-existing Methodist Church, had established themselves in the town by the mid-1890s. Three church buildings associated with these congregations survive in the district (No. 54, 61, and 148).

EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY GROWTH:

Richlands experienced its most dramatic growth during the first decade of the twentieth century. The town's population increased nearly three-fold from 160 in 1900 to 445 in 1910, with much of the growth occurring during the second half of the decade (U.S. census). One factor in this growth was the coming of the Dover and Southbound Railroad. The Goldsboro Lumber Company built this road from its mill at Dover, in Craven County, into Onslow County, primarily to tap the forest reserves
of the northern quarter of the county. Agricultural produce was also shipped on the road, and Richlands quickly became the major collection and distribution point for farmers in the surrounding countryside. The Venters & Sylvester Cotton Gin was in operation in the town in 1905; in 1915 it was joined by Grimsley and Brinkley's gin (1905 and 1915 North Carolina Year Books). The Dover and Southbound depot was a frame building located at the northwestern end of the town. The depot became the focal point of small-scale industrial development in the northwestern section of town.

Another important factor in Richlands's growth during the first decade of the twentieth century was the establishment of Onslow County's first public high school in the town in 1907 (see Onslow County Multiple Property Documentation Form: Religion and Education in Onslow County, 1734-1938. Richlands High School). The school attracted prosperous farmers from the surrounding countryside, who moved to town (keeping their rural farms) to enable their children to attend the high school.

Richlands' growth generated an increase and diversification of town businesses. The six general merchants operating in the town in 1905 were not many more than the four in the town in 1897 (1905 North Carolina Year Book; Branson, 1897: 466). By 1911 the number had swelled to fifteen (1911 North Carolina Year Book). Locally owned and operated banks began to appear in the town. Jonathan E. Steed, business associate of his father M. B. Steed, had organized the Bank of Richlands by 1904; Wayne Brinson Venters' Peoples Bank had opened by 1910 (Onslow County Deed Book 81, page 173; 1910 North Carolina Year Book). By 1913 Venters' bank was the only one in town, a monopoly it enjoyed until it closed its doors during the 1930s (at which time it was known as the Bank of Richlands). (Venters owned one of the largest tenant farms in Onslow County, Venters Farm, NR 1987, a few miles southeast of Richlands). In 1911 two hotels operated in town: the Hardy Hotel (Miller-Venters House - No. 113) on North Wilmington Street and the Cox House (Cox Hotel - No. 45) on West Hargett Street (North Carolina Year Books for various years).

LATER TWENTIETH CENTURY DEVELOPMENT:

The population of Richlands grew still more between 1910 and 1920, to 548 inhabitants (U.S. census). One source puts the population of the town at 900 in 1916 (1916 North Carolina Year Book). During the 1920s the town's population declined slightly but by 1940 it had climbed to 688 (U.S. census). New commercial development, which had occurred along the spine of North Wilmington Street during earlier decades, began to shift to West Hargett Street during the 1930s. This shift probably reflected the passage through the town of North Carolina's paved Highway 24, built in the early 1930s, which entered the town via South Wilmington Street and ran west along Hargett Street. The downtown business district continued to grow into the 1950s before the Highway 24 bypass was built west of town, siphoning off commercial development.
Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings

Survey # ________________________________
Record #: ______________________________

X See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 48 acres

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X See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the Richlands Historic District are represented on the accompanying composite tax map.

X See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the Richlands Historic District include the densest concentration of buildings associated with the district's period of significance. Outside the boundaries historic resources are too diffuse to warrant their inclusion in the district.

X See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dan Pezzoni
organization Preservation Consultant
date March 15, 1989
street & number 304 Trappers Run Drive
telephone (919)481-0053
state NC zip code 27513
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Richlands Historic District, Onslow County

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BIBLIOGRAPHY


Ford, Byron. "Modest Onslow possesses many natural advantages and excellent folks. too " (Raleigh) News and Observer. v. 119 n. 48 (February 17, 1924).

Interviews conducted in 1987 and 1988 by Daniel Pezzoni with Annie Koonce Ragsdale Boggs, Ikey Brock, Sylvester Day, Ellie Howard, Mrs. Fowler Manning, and Albert Potts.


Onslow County Deed and Tax Records, Onslow County Court House. Jacksonville, NC.


Onslow County Museum, Photographic Archives.


Historian Presha Merritt conducted much of the local research that went into the preparation of this nomination.
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet  Richlands Historic District, Onslow County  

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Unless otherwise noted, the following information pertains to all photographs, which are keyed to the resource map:

1) Richlands Historic District
2) Richlands, NC
3) Daniel Pezzoni
4) 12/87
5) NC Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC

1. View of downtown Richlands along Wilmington St.; M.B. Steed Store (Inventory List Number 121) in center; Richlands United Methodist Church (No. 148) on right; to the northeast

2. Early twentieth century commercial block on east side of Wilmington St.; M.B. Steed Store (No. 121) on right; to the northeast

3. Interior of the Richlands Supply Company Building (No. 36) on W. Hargett St.

4. Paul Humphrey Sr. Service Station (No. 49) on W. Hargett St.; to the northeast

5. (Former) First Baptist Church (No. 54) on W. Hargett St.; to the northeast

6. The Cox Hotel (No. 45) on W. Hargett St.; to the north

7. Early twentieth century houses on W. Foy St.; Daniel W. Murrill House (No. 84) on left; Branch Daugherty House (No. 83) in center; to the east

8. C. A. Winberry House (No. 52) on W. Hargett St.; to the northeast

9. Edwards-Cox House (No. 86) on W. Foy St.; to the northeast

10. Interior of the George Brooks House (No. 28) on W. Hargett St.

11. Noncontributing commercial block on the west side of N. Wilmington St. (No. 105 on right); to the north

12. Noncontributing house (No. 70) on W. Foy St.; to the south
Richlands Historic District
Richlands, North Carolina

Scale: 1" = 200'

(composite of several sections of the Richlands tax map, drawn by Trumble-McGuirk and Associates, Atlanta, GA, March, 1977)

The boundaries of the district are indicated by the heavy dashed line.

Street: property direction of lots