United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name
   (Former)
   historic Roxboro Male Academy and Methodist Parsonage

   and/or common

2. Location
   street & number 315 N. Main
   city, town Roxboro
   state North Carolina
code 037 county Person
code 145 vicinity of congressional district Second

3. Classification
   Category
   X district
   building(s)
   X structure
   site
   object
   Ownership
   public
   X private
   both
   Public Acquisition
   in process
   being considered
   N/A
   Status
   X occupied
   unoccupied
   work in progress
   Accessible
   yes: restricted
   yes: unrestricted
   no
   Present Use
   agriculture
   X commercial
   educational
   entertainment
   government
   industrial
   military
   museum
   park
   X private residence
   religious
   scientific
   transportation
   other:

4. Owner of Property
   name Mary Jane Tillman
   street & number 315 N. Main
   city, town Roxboro
   vicinity of state N.C.

5. Location of Legal Description
   courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Person County Courthouse
   street & number 100 N. Main
   city, town Roxboro
   state N.C.

6. Representation in Existing Surveys
   title None
   has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes ☑ no
   date
   federal state county local
   depository for survey records N/A
   city, town state
7. Description

Condition
- excellent
- deteriorated
- good
- ruins
- fair
- unexposed

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The former Roxboro Male Academy and Methodist Parsonage stands on a town lot among the late nineteenth and early twentieth century houses of North Main Street, one of Roxboro's principal residential thoroughfares. The house's original two-story, single-pile, main block, which was probably erected between 1840 and 1854 and is among the oldest structures still standing in Roxboro, retains only a few of its Greek Revival details, which are typical of stustantial but unpretentious mid-nineteenth century houses found throughout the North Carolina piedmont. The house underwent a major remodeling at an undetermined late nineteenth century date, at which time a two-story addition, perpendicular to and incorporating part of the original portion of the residence, was erected along the house's north side. A number of exterior and interior features of Italianate derivation probably date from the time of this remodeling. A final major change took place during the early twentieth century, when the Colonial Revival front porch was erected and a stair and two mantels inspired by the same style were installed inside the house. The residence is thus an interesting reflection of the changing tastes in domestic design that piedmont North Carolina witnessed during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The house originally stood on a low foundation of stone blocks placed at the principal points of stress; the structure was fully underpinned with brick during the early twentieth century, probably at the time the present porch was constructed. The exterior details date primarily from the late nineteenth century remodeling and reflect Italianate influence. The tall windows on the front and side elevations of the house are simply enframed and contain two-over-two sash. The thin corner posts of the late nineteenth century addition rise to small molded capitals. Only at the rear of the main block, where two second story windows with simple, broad, symmetrical frames containing six-over-six sash remain, is the original Greek Revival exterior finish readily visible. Two chimneys provide fireplaces for all six of the rooms in the house's two-story sections. An exterior chimney laid up in common bond with a single pair of stepped shoulders, which is probably original to the house, furnishes fireplaces for the southernmost rooms on the first and second stories. A broad interior chimney with a corbeled stack provides fire openings for the four first and second story rooms on the north side of the residence.

The front facade reflects the changes made to the house during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Its dominant features are the late nineteenth century addition, which projects forward of the main block, and the broad, wrap-around Colonial Revival porch. The late nineteenth century addition is topped by a gable-front roof with a molded cornice and returns. The paired one-over-one sash windows on the second story of the addition are framed by a thin surround rising to a molded, projecting hood. Delicate applied sawnwork in a pattern of thin, curving arrows may be seen in the triangular space between the paired windows and the hood. Directly below this opening on the first floor, sheltered by the porch, is a projecting three-sided slanted bay with two-over-two sash windows above rectangular molded panels.

The porch, which carries across the full facade and shelters one bay on the house's north side, consists of two sections. A recessed portion carries across two of the three bays of the original main block. The principal section shelters the entrance and the projecting late nineteenth century addition. Ten fluted Doric posts and two similar pilasters support the porch; four of the posts uphold the broad, low pediment over the entrance.
The facade of the main block, recessed behind the late nineteenth century addition, has a three-bay division on both the first and second stories. Although the original facade division of the main block is uncertain, the placement of the surviving six-over-six openings on the rear of the house suggests that the residence once had a symmetrical three-bay facade division. The two-over-two sash and simple frames of the present facade windows, which differ from the broader frames of the rear openings, further suggest that the present facade division is the product of the late nineteenth century remodeling.

The entrance occupies the ground floor bay of the main block closest to the projecting late nineteenth century addition. It consists of a door whose two leafs each have elliptical beveled glass windows over two panels and a two-light transom. The door is set in a simple surround similar to those that enframe the windows on this portion of the facade.

To the rear of the house are two simple one-story wings whose dates of construction are unknown but whose simple trim suggests that they were built during the late nineteenth century. Behind the original main block is a one-room wing reached from the southern first floor room. To the rear of the late nineteenth century addition is a somewhat larger, rectangular wing that contains the kitchen. Both wings have two-over-two sash windows and four-panel doors. It appears likely that both wings were enlarged at a date subsequent to their original construction by the enclosure of the rear porch.

The interior of the house's two-story sections follows a center hall plan, two rooms deep in the late nineteenth century addition and one room deep in the original main block. The interior is finished in plaster. The broad center hall contains the stair, which reflects Colonial Revival influence and was installed during the early years of the twentieth century. A molded handrail runs between the square, paneled newel at the first landing and the square, more plain newels at the upper landing and on the second floor. The thin balusters are also square-in-section. The stair rises from the front to the back of the hall between landings two steps above the first floor and two steps below the second story.

The trim found in the six rooms of the house's two-story sections reflects Greek Revival, Italianate, and Colonial Revival influences. The two most elaborate rooms of the residence are the first floor rooms of the late nineteenth century addition. Both have vertical beaded wainscots trimmed by molded chair rails and baseboards. The front first floor room has a typical Colonial Revival mantel with a shelf upheld by Tuscan colonettes, while the room to the rear, used for dining, has an Italianate mantel with raised cut-out panels. The center hall and the first floor room in the original main block both have deep baseboards with molded trim characteristic of Italianate design. The first floor room of the original main block has a simple Colonial Revival mantel with a mirror framed by colonettes above the shelf.

The second story is less elaborately detailed than the ground story, but like the first floor it is finished in plaster. Deep, simply molded baseboards characteristic of the Greek Revival trim all three second story rooms. The mantel in the original main block is an Italianate facing identical to the one in the dining room, while the two simple facings in the rooms of the late nineteenth century addition reflect Greek Revival.
The former Roxboro Male Academy and Methodist Parsonage, probably erected between 1840 and 1854, is one of the oldest buildings still standing in the town of Roxboro. Prior to its purchase in 1854 by the trustees of the Person County Circuit of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the building is said to have housed the Roxboro Male Academy, a small institution of learning which was apparently never incorporated by the North Carolina legislature. The building served as a Methodist parsonage from 1854 to 1915. The most prominent minister to occupy the house was William R. Webb (ca. 1819-1887), a community leader who also served at various times as clerk of the county superior court and as a Roxboro town commissioner. During this period of growth the parsonage was considerably enlarged and remodeled. As originally constructed, the building was a two-story, single-pile house with Greek Revival details typical of substantial but unpretentious residences then being built in Piedmont North Carolina. During the late nineteenth century the building underwent expansion and remodeling and was given a predominantly Italianate character. At an undetermined early twentieth century date the front porch was rebuilt in the Colonial Revival style and several Colonial Revival features were also installed inside the building. The structure thus provides an interesting reflection of the changing tastes in domestic design that Piedmont North Carolina witnessed during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Criteria Assessment:

A. Associated with the antebellum development of the town of Roxboro and the town's increasing prosperity during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

B. Associated with the life of William R. Webb (ca. 1819-1887), a Methodist minister, community leader, and local public official; and with James Anderson Long (d. 1915), a prominent businessman and industrialist who played an important role in bringing the Norfolk and Western Railroad to Roxboro in 1890.

C. Embodies distinctive characteristics of the Greek Revival, Italianate, and Colonial Revival styles, and thus provides a notable reflection of changing tastes in domestic design that the North Carolina Piedmont experienced during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
In 1854 trustees for the Person County Methodist Episcopal Church Circuit purchased a building and lot on what is now Main Street in Roxboro. The trustees specified that the building was to be used as a parsonage for the pastor of the Roxboro Methodist Episcopal Church. The congregation of that church had recently purchased on the same street another lot on which they intended to build a sanctuary. They soon constructed the frame church only a short distance from the parsonage.¹

When the structure which became the parsonage was constructed is not certain, but architectural features of the original building (which subsequently underwent additions) indicate that it was probably erected sometime between 1840 and 1860. Local tradition and the testimony of at least one Roxboro resident of the 1850s, Alexander R. Foushee, claims that prior to 1854 the building had been used as the Roxboro Male Academy. Little is known about such a school; no extant records relating to the institution have been found. Presumably, however, the academy was a small school which had only a few pupils. No reference to the academy's incorporation appears in the Laws of North Carolina—a fact which means that the school could not award diplomas and probably operated on a small scale. The architecture of the earliest portion of the structure shows that the building apparently was first constructed as a residence. If such was the case, it may have doubled as a residence and a small school. The academy also saw some service as a sanctuary when the congregation of at least one Methodist church, the old Cool-Spring Methodist Church which, before it was abandoned in the 1850s had stood a mile north of town, held services at the academy.²

According to Foushee, when the building became a parsonage after 1854, it was occupied by the Reverend William R. Webb who became pastor of the Roxboro Methodist Episcopal Church. Webb was born in Bertie County ca. 1819. He joined the Methodist Episcopal Church at the age of 17 and moved to the Roxboro area around 1842. Within a few years he became a local Methodist minister. (No records have been found of his theological training.) He was also a community leader and served as Person County clerk of superior court before the Civil War and as a town commissioner after the conflict. Webb was well-respected in Roxboro for his religious and secular service to the community. At his death in 1887, the Person County Courier noted that he had died at his residence and recalled that "he was truly a self sacrificing, faithful, Christian gentleman, much noted far and near for his piety. He was greatly admired by all that knew him, and by his death this community has not only lost its oldest and respectable citizen but one of its most pious Christians."³

When the Methodist trustees purchased the academy building in 1854 for use as a parsonage, both Roxboro and Methodism in North Carolina were experiencing a period of growth. Roxboro citizens saw the economy of their town improve significantly during the decade before the Civil War. The improvements led to expansion and an increase in building as well as to the incorporation of the town (founded 1790) in 1855.⁴ The village was the county seat and began as a stop along a stagecoach route. Roxboro's antebellum prosperity and relative growth was due partly to the general economic upswing of the state and region during the period. More specifically the town benefited from the tobacco trade which, according to historian Guion Griffis Johnson, was most prosperous in "... the tier of counties along the Virginia border" that included Person County. Roxboro merchants supplied the local tobacco farmers, and considerable wagon trade in smoking and plug tobacco passed in and out of the village.⁵ Consequently, Roxboro grew during the antebellum era and so did the ranks of Methodism as that faith became increasingly popular in North
Carolina. Thus, the Roxboro Methodist parsonage and the church it served were the results of an expanding economic and religious fervor in piedmont North Carolina before the Civil War.6

Still, despite the recognizable growth, the antebellum development of Roxboro remained small-scaled. Some of the community's wags found the incorporation of the small town to be somewhat of a joke and referred to the newly-incorporated village as "The City" and the mayor as "The Lord Mair." One resident of the period described Roxboro:

... We had practically no sidewalks, and the street, or roads, through the town were very narrow, only about 16 feet wide. Mud holes were stopped up with pine brush and poles with a little dirt thrown over them. Town lots were enclosed with rail fences except that some of them had a plank fence or paling to the front yards. Very few of the houses had ever been painted and there was only one brick house in town. This was a small house on the corner of the now Jones Hotel lot, used by Read and Hamlen as a general store.7

Amid such modest surroundings the Methodist parsonage was a relatively imposing structure.

Following the Civil War, Roxboro and Person County experienced the lean years of Reconstruction. But in the last decades of the nineteenth century, the economy revived, and the town underwent its first real boom. With the rise of the popularity of cigarette smoking, Person County's tobacco production soared, and several tobacco factories and warehouses appeared in Roxboro. The number of stores, commercial buildings, and small industries increased. One witness later described the surge in construction in the village:

During this period the town took on a pronounced air of growth. Carpenters, brick layers and painters were busy providing houses to shelter the new citizens: the saw, hammer and trowel made music on every side in a way unknown before. Quite a lot of property changed hands; a number of brick stores and shops were constructed to take the place of the old wooden houses; three or four new churches were built for the white people and colored brethren also caught the spirit of progress and built three or four places of worship.8

As part of the new building boom the parsonage received new additions, and in 1899 one Methodist official reported that "the excellent, eight-room parsonage is in good condition."9

The new late nineteenth and early twentieth century growth in Roxboro was due in part to the efforts of businessman and industrialist James Anderson Long, who was known by some residents as "the builder of modern Roxboro." Long played an important role in bringing the Norfolk and Western Railroad to Roxboro in 1890, a move which was a boon to the town's industrial and commercial development. Long also founded the People's Bank as well as the Roxboro Cotton Mills and was involved in several other industries in the community. He was a member of the state legislature for a number of terms and served on the State Building Commission appointed by Governor William W. Kitchen to supervise the erection of the State Administration Building in Raleigh in 1913.10
In addition Long was an active member and strong supporter of the Roxboro Methodist Episcopal Church. Largely through his efforts the frame church was moved from Main Street and replaced by a new brick sanctuary in 1908. It would be logical to assume that he had a role in bringing about the late nineteenth and early twentieth century additions to the parsonage. Long's other Methodist activities included being a trustee of the Methodist Orphanage in Raleigh and of Trinity College (later Duke University) in Durham. In 1920 (five years after Long's death) the third Roxboro Methodist Episcopal Church was completed on Main Street. By this time its name had been changed to Long Memorial Methodist Church to honor one of James Anderson Long's sons, Edgar, who had died.\textsuperscript{11}

The church's parsonage continued to serve the congregation until 1915 when a new pastor's residence was constructed adjacent to the church. (Although Foushee leaves the impression that the Reverend W. R. Webb resided in the first house until his death in 1887, Claire Harris of Roxboro claims that her grandfather the Reverend W. M. Jordan became pastor of the Methodist church and lived in the parsonage in 1872. Branson's Business Directory lists both Webb and Jordan as Methodist ministers in Roxboro in that year.)\textsuperscript{12} In 1915 the first parsonage was sold to one George Thaxton of Roxboro. Following his death the residence was owned and rented by several people until 1980 when it was purchased by the present owner, Mary Jane Tillman. The third and present parsonage, built in 1962, stands across town from the church.\textsuperscript{13}

The structure, of course, is closely related to the surrounding environment. Archaeological remains, such as trash pits, wells, and structural remains, which may be present, can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the structure. Information concerning use patterns, social standing and mobility, as well as structural details are often only evident in the archaeological record. Therefore, archaeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the structure. At this time no investigation has been done to discover these remains, but it is probable that they exist, and this should be considered in any development of the property.
NOTES

1Person County Deed Books (microfilm), Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina, Deed Books S, 30 and EE 31, hereinafter cited as Person Deed Books; Author's telephone interview with Clair Harris, Roxboro, July 22, 1981.


3Foushee, Reminiscences, 25; Person County Courier (Roxboro), January 20, 1887; Minutes of Commissioners of the Town of Roxboro, 1855-1867, Municipal Records, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina, 29.


7Foushee, Reminiscences, 37.


9Harris Interview.


11North Carolina Biography, IV, 81; Harris Interview.


13Person County Deed Book 23, pp. 404-405; Interview of Peter Kaplan, architectural historian with Mary Jane Tillman, Roxboro, January, 1981; Harris Interview.
9. Major Bibliographical References

See Significance Statement

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property: less than 1 acre
Quadrangle name: Roxboro
Quadrangle scale: 1:62,500

Verbal boundary description and justification:
See enclosed tax map outlined in red, Person County tax records.

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>
</table>

11. Form Prepared By

Description prepared by Peter R. Kaplan, Survey and Planning Branch
Significance prepared by Joe Mobley, Researcher

organization: N.C. Division of Archives and History
date

street & number: 109 E. Jones Street
telephone: (919) 733-6545

city or town: Raleigh
state: North Carolina

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 89–655), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Date: April 14, 1982


Interview of Peter Kaplan, architectural historian, with Mary Jane Tillman, Roxboro, January, 1981.


Person County Courier (Roxboro), January 20, 1887.

Person County Records, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina. Subgroup: Deeds.


Private Laws of North Carolina.
