

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 for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of property

historic name Harris, Spencer, House

other names/site number Harris, William T., Homeplace

2. Location

street & number 1287 North Carolina Highway 121 not for publication N/A

city or town Falkland vicinity X

state North Carolina code NC county Pitt code 147 zip code 27858

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_ statewide X locally. ( \_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jeffrey Brown SHPO 12/2/04  
Signature of certifying official Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. ( \_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

_____ entered in the National Register See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
_____ determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
_____ determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
_____ removed from the National Register	_____	_____
_____ other (explain): _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Harris, Spencer House  
Name of Property

Pitt County, NC  
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	2	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	2	Total

Name of related multiple property listing  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)  
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register  
N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: single dwelling

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: single dwelling

DOMESTIC secondary structure

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

roof asphalt

walls weatherboard

other brick

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Harris, Spencer House  
Name of Property

Pitt County, NC  
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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or a grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

ca. 1855

**Significant Dates**

ca. 1855

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Location of Additional Data**

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Harris, Spencer House  
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County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing  
1 18 272400 3948320  
2 \_\_\_\_\_

Zone Easting Northing  
3 \_\_\_\_\_  
4 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Beth Keane

organization Retrospective date June, 2004

street & number 2001 Metts Avenue telephone 910-815-1096

city or town Wilmington state NC zip code 28403

**12. Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Thomas and Jeannette Painter

street & number 1287 NC Highway 121 telephone 252-413-0703

city or town Greenville state NC zip code 27858

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Harris, Spencer, House  
Pitt County, North Carolina

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**Narrative Description**

The Spencer Harris House is located in Falkland Township, approximately ten miles northwest of Greenville, the county seat of Pitt County. Pitt County covers 656 square miles of prime agricultural land in eastern North Carolina. Located in the state's coastal plain, the county is situated west of the Pamlico Sound in the mid-eastern section of the state. The county is bordered by Edgecombe County on the northwest, Martin County on the northeast, Beaufort County on the east, Craven County on the south, Lenoir County on the southwest, and Greene and Wilson counties on the west. The county's highest point is 126.4 feet above sea level in the northwest portion of the county. In addition to Greenville, the county includes the following nine towns: Ayden, Falkland, Farmville, Grifton, Fountain, Grimesland, Simpson, and Winterville.

The Spencer Harris House sits on a one-acre parcel carved out of a 64-acre tract of farmland in Falkland Township. Facing west, the house is situated on the east side of State Route 121 and south of the junction of State Route 1261. Acres of open farmland surround the one-acre mowed parcel and several large deciduous trees shade the two-story house. A low picket fence encloses a small yard behind the house. An early-twentieth-century pack house, the only remaining outbuilding associated with the house, sits about thirty feet northeast of the dwelling. A recently constructed utility shed is also situated to the rear of the house.

The Spencer Harris House, ca. 1855, is a classic example of the popular mid-nineteenth-century Greek Revival style architecture that swept the state in the two decades prior to the Civil War. The two-story, double-pile, frame house with weatherboard siding rests on brick piers. Massive beams support the rough hewn, braced-frame structure of the house. Two-story, heavy corner posts, connected by sills, girts, and plates with mortised joints, are supported by mortise-and-tenon corner braces.

Six-over-six double-hung sash windows of the three-bay symmetrical façade flank a central four-paneled door embellished with sidelights and transom. A late-nineteenth-century, full-width front porch was recently replaced with a single-bay portico supported by Doric columns, an interpretation of the home's original porch as ascertained by ghost marks of columns on the weatherboards and mortises in the main sills of the house where the portico had been connected. At the time the portico was added, approximately three feet of weatherboard siding on each side of the sidelights was replaced with old hand-planed flush sheathing and flanked by pilasters. The flat-roofed portico is surmounted by a cement floor and balustrade. A central four-paneled door with sidelights opens onto the upper level of the portico. Six-over-six double-hung sash windows flank either side of the door.

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Harris, Spencer, House  
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The north and south elevations of the main block of the house are identical with two six-over-six double-hung windows symmetrically arranged at each level, similar to those on the façade. A central four-paneled door with sidelights is centered on the rear (east) elevation, opposite the front door. A recently constructed shed-roof porch supported by wood posts shelters the back door and a new rear deck. Wide flush boards replace the original weatherboard siding under the porch. Three six-over-six double-hung sash windows are symmetrically arranged at the second level.

The former standing-seam metal covering the low hip roof of the house has recently been replaced with composition shingles. Two interior chimneys coated with stucco ascend from the north and south slopes of the roof. Finishing exterior trim includes a replacement vinyl baseboard encircling the house, protective corner boards on all four corners, and a boxed cornice.

A recently enclosed breezeway or hyphen connects the rear kitchen to the main block of the house. The hyphen has a French door on the south side and a single door with fifteen glass lights on the north side opening onto a rear deck. Due to termite damage, the former kitchen was almost entirely rebuilt, keeping the original dimensions and form, however. The location of the previously detached kitchen was moved slightly to the south to align with the south elevation of the house. The one-story frame kitchen sits on brick piers and is clad with weatherboard siding. It includes a small six-over-six double-hung sash window in both the north and south elevations. The gabled roof is covered with composition shingles.

The interior plan of the Spencer Harris House features a wide, center passage on both levels flanked on each side by two equal-sized rooms. The central hall is terminated by a rear four-panel door with sidelights. A single-rise staircase ascends from front to rear along the south wall of the passage. A turned newel post with a square base anchors the balustrade capped by a molded handrail. A small closet with a vertical board door is tucked under the back of the staircase. First-floor ceilings are nine feet, six inches high, while the second level ceilings are eight feet high. The sidelights and transoms surrounding the front and rear doors assist in illuminating the central passage, while large six-over-six sash windows flood the rooms with light. Paneled aprons provide a decorative finish to the first floor windows. The former dining room (rear, north side) retains an original built-in cupboard constructed with wide cypress boards. The cabinet is located adjacent to the fireplace mantel.

The interior is further defined by heart-pine floors, wide, plain baseboards, and four-panel doors throughout. Simple Greek Revival-style, post-and-lintel mantels with flat mantel shelves survive in the four downstairs rooms and one of the second-floor bedrooms. Marbleized painting on the baseboards and mantel in the front, south room has recently been uncovered and restored to its original appearance. Due to extensive deterioration, the plaster walls were replaced with sheet rock during the recent rehabilitation of the house. A thin coating of plaster

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was applied over the sheet rock to simulate the original walls. A small section of the original plaster wall depicting original decorative painting was left intact along and near the top of the south-side wall in the central hall, behind the staircase.

The following interior alterations were all accomplished during the rehabilitation of the previously deteriorated house was undertaken in 2001. A closet was removed between the first-story southwest and southeast rooms and replaced with a door, thereby connecting the rooms. The closets on either side of the fireplace in the northwest room were modified to become recessed built-in bookshelves and cabinets. The fireplaces in the second-story northwest and northeast bedrooms were covered over and the mantels reused in the first-story, south rooms. A small, second-story bathroom was added to the rear of the central passage, near the top of the staircase. In addition, the second-story, southeast bedroom was transformed into a large bathroom and closet, adjoining the master bedroom. The bathroom includes a Victorian-era mantel surrounding the fireplace. The bedroom and bathroom were connected by adding a door to the back of the closet in the southwest (master) bedroom. The breezeway connecting the house to the kitchen was enclosed and the kitchen's interior was completely remodeled to accommodate built-in cabinets, modern appliances, and a central work island. The heating system was upgraded with a wood-burning water furnace located adjacent to the pack house behind the house. The electricity was also brought up to code to service modern appliances.

Despite the interior alterations, the house retains significant Greek Revival details, including the mantels, doors, and window and door surrounds, floors, and baseboards. The Spencer Harris House also conveys its historic period in overall proportion and organization of the exterior and interior, the basic plan and mass, and the size and shape of window and door openings.

A two-story, frame, gable-roof pack house, approximately 36- by 16-feet, with weatherboard and metal siding, sits northeast of the main house and dates to ca. 1910. The former metal roof with exposed rafters has recently been replaced with a composition shingle roof. A central door on the south elevation is protected by a recently constructed shed-roof porch. A six-over-six sash window is included on each level of the south elevation. The remaining original windows have been covered with weatherboards or metal sheathing. A central staircase has recently been constructed on the interior to make the second level more accessible. The packing and storage of tobacco leaves before going to market took place in this building. The building is currently used for storage. An open-shed addition supported by poles is attached to the west gable end. The addition protects stacked firewood and a new wood burning water furnace.

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Harris, Spencer, House  
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A small frame utility shed built in 2003 to resemble an outhouse sits behind the main house and south of the pack house and is a non-contributing building. The building has a shed roof clad with composition shingles and weatherboard siding. The central four-panel door is flanked by three-light sidelights surmounting recessed panels. The building houses a water softener.

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Harris, Spencer, House  
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**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The ca. 1855 Spencer Harris House is significant under Criterion C as a well-preserved example of the pervasive mid-nineteenth-century Greek Revival-style houses that were built in Pitt County and the surrounding region in the two decades prior to the Civil War. The two-story, double-pile, frame house is representative of Pitt County's relatively prosperous mid-nineteenth-century agricultural society. By the time the house was built by Spencer Harris, he was already one of the largest and most prosperous landholders and merchants in Pitt County. After his death in 1872, the house and much of the property remained in the Harris family until 1918, passing from one generation to the next. Allowed to fall into disrepair during the twentieth century, the house, under new ownership, has recently been renovated. Although only one acre is included with the nomination, the house remains in a rural setting, surrounded on all sides by agricultural fields. A ca. 1910 tobacco pack house, the only remaining agricultural building associated with the Spencer Harris House, is included with the nomination.

**Historical Background**

Located in the western part of Pitt County on high ground about one mile from the Tar River, the town of Falkland owes its existence to its strategic location a short distance from the banks of the Tar River where early settlers established landings. The village, originally known as Faulkner House, was a thriving trade center in the late nineteenth century, and early decades of the twentieth, frequented primarily by the land-owning planters active in the area. Many of the area's plantation owners used the small village as a commercial source for the distribution of products down the Tar River to ports at Washington and New Bern (Power, p. 450).

The Harris family, one of the earliest settlers in Pitt County, also became one of the largest landholders in Falkland Township. Timothy Harris, Jr. had migrated to North Carolina from Prince George County, Virginia during the eighteenth century. He and his wife, Elizabeth Jones Harris, had two sons, Richard and Henry. On October 21, 1782, Henry Harris (b. January 15, 1759, d. ca. 1825) received two land grants in Pitt County of 300 acres each. The 1800 Pitt County census reveals that the Harris household included one male (age 26-45); three males under ten; one female (age 26-45); one female (age 16 to 26); and fourteen slaves. On December 1, 1808, he added 218 acres of land in Craven County to his landholdings (Craven County Deed Book 37, p. 805). The 1815 Pitt County tax list discloses Henry Harris also owned 112 acres in Falkland township on the south side of Tyson's Creek and 250 acres lying in Glass House Pocosin, valued at \$461.00, in addition to eleven slaves. By 1820, the household included Henry Harris (over 45), his wife (over 45), and ten male slaves. During the 1820s, Henry Harris constructed a two-story, five-bay, side-gable house with exterior-end chimneys on his Pitt County tract of land, approximately five miles north of Farmville. At his death in 1825, his son, Spencer, inherited the property.

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Spencer Harris was born in Pitt County on August 20, 1805. When of age, it is thought he went to Craven County to manage one of his father's farms. While there, he met Mary Dudley and they were married on February 9, 1826, in Swift Creek in Craven County (*North Carolina Star*, February 26, 1826). His father had died the previous year; consequently, Spencer and his new wife returned to Pitt County and moved into his father's former house. Mary Dudley Harris died several years later on May 10, 1828, from complications after giving birth. The baby survived and was named Spenser Harris. He died at the age of ten on September 4, 1838 (Harris family genealogy).

Spencer married Margaret D. Taylor, daughter of John and Sarah Taylor, on May 20, 1830, in Edgecombe County and brought his new wife to his Pitt County plantation (Harris family genealogy). By 1830, the Pitt County census reveals Spencer Harris is the owner of forty-two slaves. Spencer was also embroiled in the political movements of his day and attended Republican Party meetings against the Whig Party. In April, 1838, Spencer was named as one of the delegates from Pitt County to a Republican Convention held in Washington, North Carolina. In August, 1838, Spencer Harris and several other plantation owners near Falkland advertised in the *Tarboro* newspaper for a teacher for a school built in their vicinity, twelve miles from Greenville (*Tarboro Free Press*, August 4, 1838).

On March 13, 1839, Spencer Harris purchased a tract of land for \$975 from George Washington Wallace. The 250-acre tract was situated south of the Tar River along the east side of the road from "Foreman's Landing to Contentnea Creek," now known as the Centre Bluff Road (Deed Book II, p. 124). The deed did not include a one-half acre cemetery tract (now located behind the Spencer Harris House and containing the graves of George W. Wallace (d. October 18, 1839) and his wife, Jennie Wallace (b. October 29, 1781, d. October 29, 1871). It was on this tract of land in the mid 1800s that Spencer constructed the spacious two-story, double-pile, Greek Revival-style house, possibly for his brother-in-law, Thomas Taylor, the overseer on this plantation.

By 1850, Spencer Harris was among the largest landholders and wealthiest men in Pitt County. The census of that year revealed that he owned land in Pitt County valued at \$6,544. He also owned a gristmill and seventy-three slaves. He and his second wife, Margaret, had a large brood of children including Mary S. (b. May 10, 1831), Henry W. (b. September 17, 1832), Sarah Ann (b. July 11, 1834), Margaret Jane (b. October 24, 1836), Elizabeth (b. September 16, 1838), L. Victoria (b. September 17, 1840), John Spenser (b. September 10, 1843), and William T. (b. May 17, 1846).

It does not appear that the Civil War had much of a detrimental effect on the Harris family, although it was reported in March 29, 1862, edition of the *The Tarboro Southern* that "farmers in the Falkland area burned every bale of cotton to prevent Yankees from getting it."

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Harris, Spencer, House  
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The family continued to prosper and turned to raising cotton on the land, replacing slaves with tenant farmers and sharecroppers. Branson's Business Directories of 1869 and 1872 listed Spencer S. Harris as a leading farmer owning 2,279 acres.

Spencer Harris died on January 12, 1872, while out in the field with his workers (*Tarboro Southern*, February 1, 1872). According to a local story: "Spencer rode down to a spring on his place and dismounted his horse and drank the cool sparkling water. He then sat down under a spreading tree and forthwith died. Lightning shortly afterwards struck the tree and the spring dried up completely" (Cotten, p. 44).

Spencer's youngest son, William T., was twenty-six years old at the time his father died. He lived with his widowed mother, Margaret, in the house his father built on Centre Bluff Road (1880 U. S. Population census). He continued to farm the land and according to a local 1885 newspaper, William T. Harris ran a fifteen-horse farm. Margaret Harris died on February 6, 1887. In future deeds, the house was referred to as the "William T. Harris Homeplace." On August 2, 1887, several months after his mother's death, William married a neighbor, Nannie Dew (Harris family genealogy). William and Nannie did not have any children of their own, although by 1900, they had taken in two nephews, George and Hernden Dew (1900 U. S. Population Census for Pitt County). Nannie Dew Harris died on January 1, 1904, and William died the following year on May 19, 1905, while sitting at the supper table at his home. William's obituary reported that he was survived by his two brothers, Messrs. Henry and John S. Harris. It went on to say that he was a good citizen and well-to-do farmer (*Eastern Reflector*, 1905).

Henry and John inherited the farm and the "William T. Harris Homeplace" (Pitt County Estate Records, NC Archives). On September 13, 1905, Henry Harris and his wife, Jennie Harris, sold their share of the 600-acre farm to his brother, John Spenser (Deed Book H-8, p. 15). John Spenser had acquired a law degree from University of North Carolina Chapel Hill and had worked as a lawyer for a short time. He later returned to farming and was growing tobacco in 1894. John had married Emma Lockhart Foust, daughter of Isaac Foust and Mary Hold, on December 13, 1870. Seven children were born of their union, two of whom died as children. John Spenser Harris died on October 20, 1908 (Harris family genealogy).

Between 1908 and 1915, the surviving five children of John Spenser Harris sold their share of the "William T. Harris Homeplace" (approximately 700 acres) to their brother, William Howard (Deed Books E-9, p. 320, U-9, p. 308 & 309, and C-11, p. 166). William Howard had attended Trinity School in Chocowinity, North Carolina in 1906-1907. He married Huldah Louise Dixon on January 16, 1912, daughter of John Dixon and Sarah Smith. William Howard and Louise had five sons between the years 1912 and 1921 (Harris family genealogy). The Harris family left the farm and moved to Farmville in 1918. William Howard had given power

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of attorney to J. T. Dixon on January 19, 1918, to sell 430 acres of the W. T. Harris Homeplace to T. D. Gurley (1/4 interest), F. L. Peacock (1/4 interest), and G. R. Benton (1/2 interest) for \$36,000 (Deed Book P-12, p. 61). William Howard Harris died on October 2, 1921, shortly after the birth of his last child (Harris family genealogy).

Peacock, Benton, and Gurley, all of Wayne County, proceeded to sell 302 acres of the property for \$8,373 on January 13, 1919, to B. M. Lewis, Blanche Lewis, and Mary Lewis. The land was referred to as Lots 3, 4, 5, A, & B of what is known as the subdivision of the Howard Harris Farm as surveyed and mapped by N. R. Kenney, C. E. (Deed Book H-13, p. 185 and Map Book 2, p. 23). Apparently there was some question about the legality of the transaction, for a deed dated February 26, 1923, reveals the same piece of property was sold by John Hill Paylor, Commissioner and trustee for the heirs of William Howard Harris (William Harris, Richard Harris, David Harris, Allen Moore Harris, and Howard Harris Jr., all minors) to the same Benjamin May Lewis, Mary Lewis Land, and Blanche Lewis Rouse (Deed Book Q-14, p. 456). The Lewis family was also a prominent landholder in the community with roots extending back to the early nineteenth century.

The Spencer Harris House remained in the ownership of the Lewis family until 2000, although the land was further divided in 1944. The Lewis family retained a 97.2-acre cleared tract fronting NC Highway 121 (Centre Bluff Road) and a 65-acre tract of woodland. John B. Lewis owned the property from the 1930s until his death in 1987. His son, John B. Lewis Jr., inherited the property upon the death of his father (Estate File 87E-536). The house was rented to the Garris family, tenant farmers, during most of this time period. On October 26, 2000, John B. Lewis Jr. and his wife, Kay Ellen Isley Lewis, sold ninety-three percent interest of one acre of the property, including the Harris House, to Thomas Richard Painter and his wife, Jeannette Marie Painter (Deed Book 1081, p. 199). Apparently Judge Lewis had left a small interest in the property to The North Carolina Symphony Society, Inc., for another deed, also dated October 26, 2000, conveys seven percent interest in the one-acre tract to Thomas and Jeannette Painter (Deed 1081, p. 195). Thomas and Jeannette Painter began renovations on the Harris House in 2000.

### CONTEXT C – ARCHITECTURE

The Greek Revival style, initially used in this country for public buildings in Philadelphia as early as 1818, became more vernacular by the time it became common in the rural areas of the South ca. 1840. During the years 1840 to 1860, the Greek Revival style became the preferred domestic style in Pitt County, and elements of the style were also applied to churches, stores, and occasionally, to outbuildings. A booming cotton economy in the 1850s, provided Pitt County planters with the means to construct more spacious dwellings. The double-pile Greek Revival-style house with its square and massive proportions, low-pitched hip roof, full-width hip-roof porch, and simple but bold design elements characterized the style for domestic dwellings built

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Harris, Spencer, House  
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for the planter class in Pitt County. The use of interior chimneys also became advantageous in order to heat the additional rooms in the new double-pile form (Power, pp. 47-49).

The two-story, double-pile plantation house built for Spencer Harris in the mid 1850s, is an excellent and well-preserved example of the Greek Revival style built in eastern North Carolina. Hallmarks of the style manifested in the Harris House include a symmetrical three-bay façade, a low hip roof with overhanging eaves, simple window and door moldings and corner boards, large six-over-six sash windows, and a central door enframed with sidelights and a multi-light transom. A late nineteenth-century, full-width hip porch has recently been replaced with an interpretation of the original mid-nineteenth-century Greek Revival portico. The generously proportioned rooms and wide central passage reflect the status and prosperity of the plantation's owner. Interior design elements include raised four-panel doors, post-and-lintel mantels, paneled aprons under the windows, and decorative painting in several of the rooms.

Another example of a Greek Revival-style house found in Pitt County includes the Pugh-Tucker House (ca. 1850) located in the St. John's vicinity near Grifton. The house is an excellent illustration of the two-story, double-pile form retaining front and rear two-tiered entrance bay porches. Like the Spencer Harris House, it features a low, hipped roof with overhanging eaves and two interior chimneys. Later porch additions include decorative sawnwork and turned balustrades (Power, p. 67).

The Foreman-Atkinson House, built in the 1850s in the Falkland vicinity of Pitt County is a blend of Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, and Italianate elements. From the front, it resembles the Harris House with its symmetrical three-bay façade, large six-over-six sash windows, and low hip roof with two interior chimneys. The house is the only example in Pitt County, however, with a T-plan and an interior chimney in the rear two-story ell. It also includes a full-width front porch supported by sturdy posts. This house is embellished with bracketed eaves, tripartite windows, and carved corner posts with Gothic arches and molded capitals. The interior retains some impressive marbleized faux finishes, similar to the painting uncovered in the Harris House. They may have been executed by the same skilled craftsman (Power, p. 75).

The ca. 1859 Dr. Peyton Hopkins Mayo House located in the town of Falkland also represents one of the few remaining two-story, double-pile antebellum houses built in Pitt County. Distinguished by its massive scale and low hip roof, the center-hall house plan is similar to the Spencer Harris House, although more finely detailed. Its symmetrical three-bay façade with large six-over-six sash windows and central door with sidelights and transom resemble the fenestration on the Harris House. The Mayo House, however, retains a full-width hip-roof front porch with later additions of delicate sawnwork. Prominent interior elements include an open center hall stair with turned newel and balustrade and raised four-panel doors throughout (Power, p. 458).

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Pitt County, North Carolina

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The adjacent county of Lenoir provides additional examples of the pervasive use of the Greek Revival style in northeastern North Carolina during the antebellum period. The Robert Bond Vause House, built in the mid 1850s, closely resembles the Spencer Harris House with its substantial two-story, three-bay, double-pile form and modest detailing. The Vause House also includes a hip roof with overhanging eaves and a hip-roof porch sheltering the central entrance with sidelights and transom (Little, p. 415). A more elaborate example is the Dempsey Wood House (NR 1971). Like the Spencer Harris House, the Dempsey Wood House features a double-pile form with a low hip roof, a three-bay façade, and a central portico sheltering an elaborate entrance with sidelights and transom. The Dempsey Wood House, however, has full pilasters adorning the corners, a modillion cornice, and cornerblocks adorning the interior door and window surrounds.

The ca. 1855 Lunsford R. Brown House in Martin County was constructed in the Greek Revival style for one of the county's most prosperous planters. Although the house is very similar to the Spencer Harris House with its two-story, three-bay, double-pile form, the Brown House features a side-gable roof with cornice returns. Identifying features of the Greek Revival style found on the house include the plain corner pilasters, six-over-six sash windows, and a boxed cornice. The Brown House also includes two interior chimneys and a flat-roofed, central bay supported by four Doric pillars. Interior elements similar to the Spencer Harris House include pilaster-and-frieze mantels, a handsome stair in the central hall with a heavy tapered newel and thin square balusters, wide baseboards, and four-panel doors (Butchko, p. 168).

The previously discussed examples of Greek Revival-style architecture in Pitt, Martin, and Lenoir counties include only a sampling of the number of houses built for the planter class in eastern North Carolina during the antebellum years. The surviving houses, with their generous proportions and classically-inspired elements, illustrate the economic power and sophistication of northeastern North Carolina's planter class in the years prior to the Civil War.

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundaries of the nominated property coincide with the boundaries delineated for lot 4649-16-4248 on the accompanying Pitt County tax map. The one-acre lot measures 301 feet on the north, 142 feet on the east, 299 feet on the south, and 163 feet on the west.

**Boundary Justification**

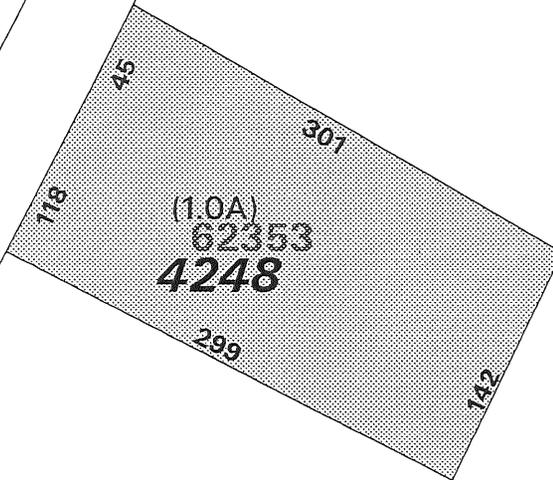
The boundary encompasses the one-acre parcel of land currently associated with the Spencer Harris House and includes the extant historic buildings associated with the house.

Spencer Harris House

Falkland Vicinity  
Pitt County, Ne

36986

(1216)



121

13697



**PITT COUNTY  
TAX ASSESSOR'S  
OFFICE**

Parcel Number: **62353**

Requested by:

M./J.



**Parcel Lines**



**Soil Lines**



Based on the North Carolina  
State Plane Coordinate System  
1927 Datum

**Price: \$ 1.00**

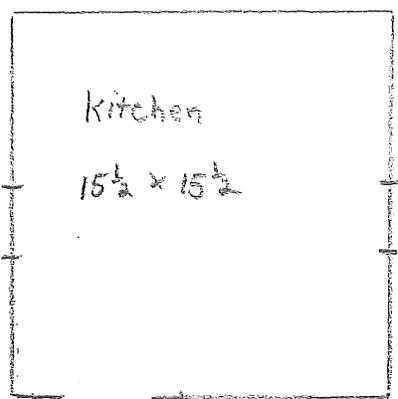
Scale: 1" : 115 ft

This map is furnished  
by PITT COUNTY for  
illustration purposes  
only. This map is  
**NOT** a certified survey  
and no reliance may be  
placed in its accuracy.

Owner: PAINTER, THOMAS RICHARD &  
Acct#: 11891570  
Cur-tax-value: 80770  
Cur-land-value: 7200

Spencer Harris House  
 Falkland vicinity  
 Pitt Co, NC

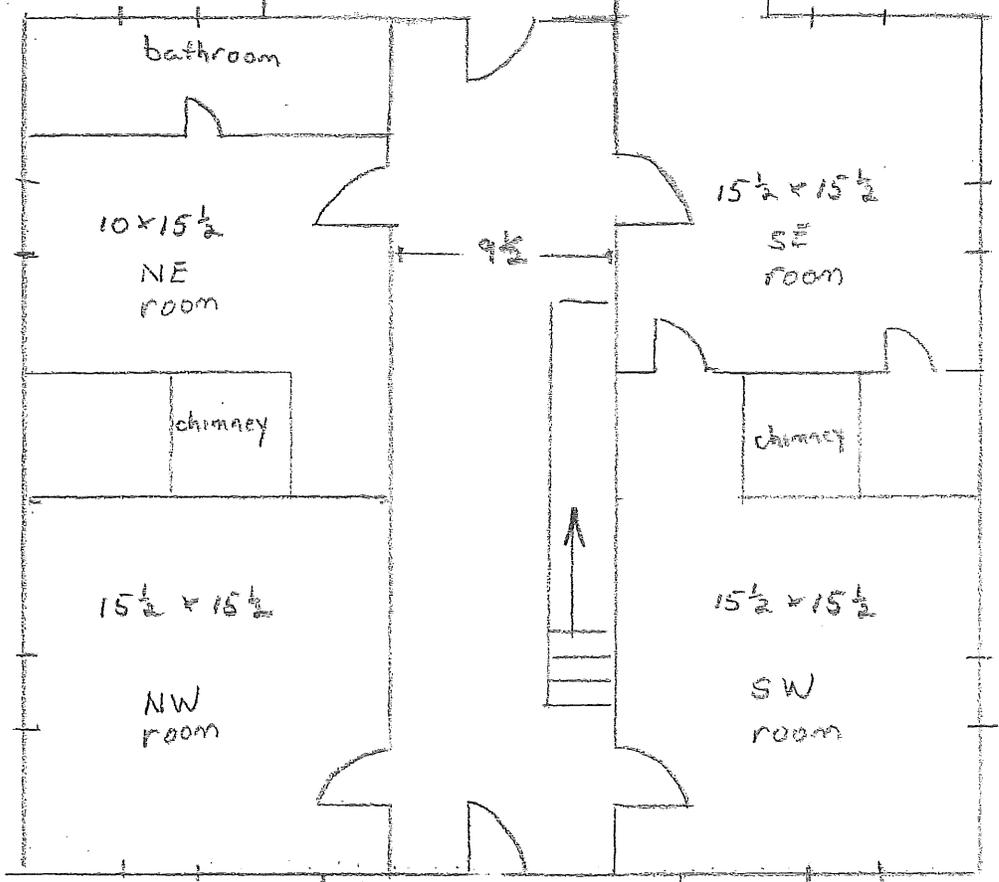
16'



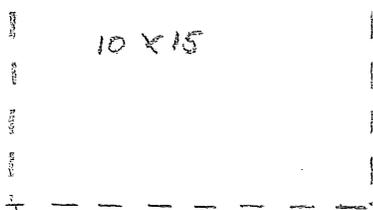
16'



6 x 14



36'



42'

1" = ~ 8'

3	.9144
4	1.2192
5	1.5240
6	1.8288
7	2.1336
8	2.4384
9	2.7432
10	3.0480

To convert feet to meters  
multiply by .3048

To convert meters to feet  
multiply by 3.2808

SPENCER HARRIS HOME  
ZONE 18  
EASTING: 272400  
NORTHING: 3948320  
FALKLAND QUAD  
PittCo, NC



32'30" 270

271

272

77°30'

35°37'30"

INTERIOR-GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA-1981  
273000mE

**ROAD CLASSIFICATION**

- Primary highway, hard surface . . . . .
- Light-duty road, hard or improved surface . . . . .
- Secondary highway, hard surface . . . . .
- Unimproved road . . . . .
- Interstate Route
- U. S. Route
- State Route

(GREENVILLE SW)  
5555 III SW



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

CONTOURS AND ELEVATIONS  
IN METERS

**FALKLAND, N. C.**  
NE/4 FALKLAND 15' QUADRANGLE  
N3537.5-W7730/7.5  
**1980**

DMA 5455 II NE-SERIES V842

