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
   historic name  Humphrey-Williams Plantation  
   other names/site number  Humphrey-Williams-Smith House and Plantation  

2. Location
   street & number  East & West sides of N.C. 211 betw. SR 1001 & 1769  
   city, town  Lumberton  
   state  North Carolina  code  NC  
   county  Robeson  code  155  
   zip code  28358  

3. Classification
   Ownership of Property  
   □ private  
   □ public-local  
   □ public-State  
   □ public-Federal  
   Category of Property  
   □ building(s)  
   □ district  
   □ site  
   □ structure  
   □ object  
   Number of Resources within Property  Contributing  Noncontributing  
   □ 5  □ 3  buildings  
   □ 1  □  sites  
   □  □ structures  
   □  □ objects  
   □ 6  □ 3  Total  

   Name of related multiple property listing:  N/A  
   Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register  2  
   (main house and Ellis Store)  

4. State/Federal Agency Certification
   As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this □ 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 □ meets □ does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.  
   Signature of certifying official  
   [Signature]  
   State Historic Preservation Office  
   Date  9-28-88  
   State or Federal agency and bureau  

   In my opinion, the property □ meets □ does not meet the National Register criteria. 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:  
   □ 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:)  
   Signature of the Keeper  
   Date of Action
### 6. Function or Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)</th>
<th>Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic: single dwelling</td>
<td>Domestic: single dwelling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Domestic: secondary structure</td>
<td>Domestic: secondary structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture/Subsistence: processing</td>
<td>Agriculture/Subsistence: processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce/Trade: department store</td>
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### 7. Description

#### Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

- Other: vernacular Greek Revival

#### Materials (enter categories from instructions)

- **foundation**: brick
- **walls**: weatherboard
- **roof**: asphalt
- **other**: wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Humphrey-Williams House, a two-story frame farmhouse dating from the second quarter of the nineteenth century, is located close to the road in an impressive setting of large trees, surrounded by an early wooden picket fence. A number of early outbuildings, including a barn, a carriage house, a smokehouse, and a store-post office, complete the farm complex. The house five bays wide and three deep, is in its original form with the exception of an unobtrusive twentieth century one-story center rear wing, which replaced the original one-bay wide two-story porch. It is set on a high brick foundation and covered with plain lapped siding. Nine-over-nine sash windows with simple molded architraves beneath projecting cap molding illuminate all elevations. In each upper gable end are four-pane transom windows with the same surround. A handsome molded box cornice with short returns terminates the front and rear facades, and a narrow molded cornice continues along the gables. Two interior brick chimneys with ornamental stucco bands beneath the molded caps rise from the gable roof.

An original one-story shed porch runs across the main (south) facade. The porch roof extends beyond the porch floor, and is supported by turned posts with unusual turned capitals resembling coiled rope. The posts are set on freestanding brick piers. The treatment of the porch cornice is identical to that of the main cornice. Chamfered posts, plain balusters, and a molded handrail form the porch railing. The space enclosed by the porch is treated like an interior room, with three facade entrances with detailed architectural trim opening to the porch, and a flat-paneled main door extending across the facade nearly to the corners. The porch railing is identical to the interior stair railing, which enhances the interior ambience. In the center bay is a double door with transom and sidelights. The door, each leaf containing a single vertical panel, has an elaborate surround consisting of pilasters composed of slender engaged half-round moldings, with flat-paneled corner blocks, supporting a molded entablature above the door. Pilasters composed of slender vertical wooden strips which form flat panels flank the sidelights and support an identical entablature surmounting the entire entrance. Each flanking entrance is a single door containing two vertical panels set within a plain frame and surrounded by a transom and an entablature like that of the main entrance. The first-floor facade windows are distinguished from the remaining windows by an architrave composed of slender applied vertical wooden members like the center entrance pilasters.
The interior of the Humphrey-Williams House, a center-hall plan two room deep, continues the vernacular Greek Revival finish of the exterior. The hall is divided into a front and rear hall at both levels. The rear hall was originally open to the rear porch at both levels, but was closed in when the rear porch was removed. An open-string stair rises against the east wall in the front hall. A tall chamfered newel, plain balusters and a molded handrail form the balustrade. The flat-paneled hall wainscot, with a simple molded chair rail, is repeated on the stair spandrel and continues up the stair wall to the upper hall. Above the wainscot the spandrel is flat-paneled, and curvilinear brackets adorn the open string. With the exception of the parlor, each room has plastered walls and a wood-sheathed ceiling. The first-floor front and rear hall and the first-floor southeast room contain flat-paneled wainscots with molded chair rails, and the second-floor front hall contains a flat-paneled wainscot. The window and door architraves throughout the house are very similar to the architraves of the first-floor facade and are surmounted by projecting molded caps. In several of the rooms the window architraves extend to the floor, framing two horizontal flat panels. Each door has two vertical flat panels, and a number of original box locks survive. Each of the rooms contains the original mantel; no two are identical, but each is composed of pilasters, frieze and shelf elaborated by varying combinations of the same decorative elements employed on the facade.

The southwest room, the parlor, the most finely finished room, has plastered walls and ceiling, with a molded plaster frieze and cornice and a large plaster ceiling medallion composed of concentric rings. The parlor mantel, the most elaborate in the house, is composed of symmetrically molded pilasters with a two-tier molded frieze, a flat-paneled center tablet, and a molded cornice and shelf.


The store-post office, located at the rear west side of the house, is a small rectangular frame building covered with plain lapped siding and a steep gable roof with plain boxed eaves. The main (south) gable end facade contains the only entrance, a diagonally sheathed batten door hung on strap hinges, with a large iron door pull. A small window with a single flat-paneled shutter is present in the front and rear. Beneath the front window is the letter chute, probably dating from 1856 when the Raft Swamp Post Office was established here. The interior is covered with wide horizontal sheathing, with exposed beaded ceiling joists. The windows are framed by a simpler version of the interior surrounds of the main house. The built-in wooden shelves and counter are perhaps original to the store.
3. William Humphrey House  Built circa 1784. Contributing

Frame saltbox form building, originally a house. Shows evidence of former front porch. Williams family tradition identifies this as the original plantation house of William Humphrey and wife Ann Blount and the birthplace of Richard Humphrey. It was converted to a barn after 1846, and still functions as such.

4. Smokehouse  Built circa 1900. Contributing

Stands near rear entrance to house in original form, one-story rectangular frame building with low gable roof.

5. Annie Fairly's House  Circa 1935. Contributing

One-room, gable front frame servant's quarters located fifty yards from main house on south side. Built for Negro servant.

6. Tobacco Barn  Circa 1900. Contributing

Traditional tall, gabled form with open sheds extending on two sides. Located 80 yards southeast of main house.

7. Carriage House  19th century. Contributing

Rectangular gable front building with shallow gable roof, heart pine construction. Lean-tos added on long sides. Used presently as a garage. Located adjacent to William Humphrey House.
   One-story frame and masonite building with shed roof, two rooms.

   Frame building used for first ten years for hog production, now serves as stable.

10. Shop  Circa 1965. Noncontributing
    "Butler" building which serves as machine shop and storage facility for farm.

11. Plantation Acreage  566 acre tract which remains from the 18th century plantation. Contributing

All of the buildings located on the plantation are clustered on the 10.6 acre house lot, listed in the National Register in 1973. The remainder of the original 1100 acre plantation is 556 acres, still farmed as it was during the period of significance. In continuing to be used as it more or less has been used since its establishment in the eighteenth century, this plantation conveys the isolated visual character typical of early Robeson County homesteads. Standing near the center of the plantation, the main house faces west to plowed fields and the timberlands which form the western border of the property. Highway 211 bisects the farm, passing by the front gate in the same roadbed which served as the old Floral College Road from the 1840s. From the house it is not possible to see any other encroaching civilization, and the landscape perfectly preserves the plantation's antebellum ambience. Approaching the house by NC 211 from either the north or south, one sees only the house and its outbuildings against their backdrop of field and forest. Photographs of the house from its approaches on the road show no significant change in the landscape from the early twentieth century.

The 566 acre farm was listed in the Century Farm Register of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture in April 1986.

RESOURCE COUNT EXPLANATION: #1 and #2 were listed in the NR previously.
8. Statement of Significance

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

☐ nationally  ☒ statewide  ☐ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  ☒ A  ☒ B  ☒ C  ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  ☐ A  ☐ B  ☐ C  ☐ D  ☐ E  ☐ F  ☐ G

<table>
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<th>Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)</th>
<th>Period of Significance</th>
<th>Significant Dates</th>
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<tr>
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<td>ca. 1846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
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Cultural Affiliation  N/A

Significant Person  N/A

Architect/Builder  Unknown

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

The Humphrey-Williams House, on a 10.6 acre house tract, was listed in the National Register in 1973. With this nomination the entire 566 acre plantation associated with the house is being nominated. The vernacular Greek Revival style plantation house, built in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, is of statewide architectural significance for its unusual and whimsical architectural trim as well as its well-preserved unusual front porch, handled as an interior room. Six contributing outbuildings, one of which is an antebellum store/post office, stand on the house tract. The 556 acres of land surrounding the house tract contain pasture, field and woodland and continue to be farmed in a traditional manner. The pristine plantation, designated a Century Farm in 1986, is one of the finest examples of an antebellum plantation surviving in southeastern North Carolina.

Architectural Significance

The Humphrey-Williams House, completed in 1846, is one of the best-preserved of the few remaining examples of antebellum domestic architecture in Robeson County, a swampy, sparsely settled area of the state in the nineteenth century. It is significant not only for the unusual application of whimsical Greek Revival architectural trim, but as an example of the fluid handling of interior and exterior space characteristic of southeastern North Carolina dwellings of the period. The facade porch is finished to resemble an interior room, and the rear hall at both levels was originally open to the outside as a porch. A portico in antis occurs at the nearby Philadelphus Presbyterian Church, which, according to county tradition, was built by the same carpenter who built the Humphrey-Williams House.

Agricultural Significance

The current 566 acre plantation is still used much as it has been for the last two centuries, and it is one of the last such family estates in Robeson County. Four hundred acres are actively managed as timberland, while the remaining acreage comprises cleared farmland and pastures which

See continuation sheet
surround the house. An 1846 inventory of the Richard Humphrey estate reveals that the farm was then used to produce corn, rice, cotton, tobacco, sheep, hogs, and cattle. Timber and turpentine have always been important commodities on this plantation, both in the antebellum period and in the second half of the nineteenth century when Dr. Williams operated a turpentine distillery here. Today the farm acreage is rented for the production of corn, soybeans, wheat and oats, and the timberland continues to supply valuable income. The plantation is important for the southeastern North Carolina region because its 220 year history has continuously reflected the socio-economic and political vicissitudes of this agrarian, tri-racial, and largest county in the area. In 1860, this plantation was one of 311 farms in North Carolina containing more than one thousand acres.
Historical Background

The 566 acre plantation, an irregular parallelogram, is a pristine rural property located in the level landscape of the southeastern coastal plain in central Robeson County. It is the remainder of the original Humphrey plantation of the eighteenth century, and has been conveyed through gift or inheritance as a family estate in unbroken succession since Revolutionary times, and has been occupied and farmed by that family continuously for over two centuries. The plantation is located on the east side of Raft Swamp, a tributary of the Lumber River, along a section of the swamp which was patrolled by General Rutherford during the so-called Battle of Raft Swamp in October 1781. The patriarch of the Humphrey family of Robeson County was Chambers Humphrey, a native of Surry County, Virginia, who migrated to what was at that time Bladen County, North Carolina by 1769. Chambers Humphrey served in the North Carolina Militia during the American Revolution, and his military pay vouchers are filed in the North Carolina State Archives. Chambers Humphrey purchased private and state lands along Drowning Creek (now Lumber River), Saddletree Swamp, and Raft Swamp, amounting to at least 1100 acres before his death in 1789. Humphrey's Bladen holdings had become part of newly-formed Robeson County in 1787, and examination of Bladen and Robeson County deeds shows that before his death, Chambers Humphrey conveyed at least 300 acres to his son William. This tract became the nucleus of a later sizeable homesead for William Humphrey and Ann Blount, whom William married in 1784. William Humphrey prospered as a slave-owning planter and acquired at least one thousand additional acres during his lifetime. At his death in 1820 he bequeathed his entire holdings to his infant son Richard Blount Humphrey (1817-1846). The boy's slaves and lands were managed by relatives, who were court-appointed guardians, until Richard Humphrey attained the age of majority in 1838.

The Humphreys were lettered people as evidenced by the great amount of primary documentation extant in the plantation house, particularly from the period of Richard Humphrey's guardianship and early adulthood. The completion of the main house can be dated precisely through the journal of Richard Humphrey, who noted the completion of his house in his entry of February 20, 1846. Richard Humphrey occupied his "new" house seven and one half months and perished in the great typhoid epidemic that swept eastern North Carolina in the fall of 1846. The 1,043 acres granted in January 1848 to Charity Thompson Humphrey (1817-1856) as her widow's dower and thirds in the estate of her deceased husband would indicate that Richard Humphrey at his death possessed upwards of 3,200 acres. Charity Humphrey's dower included the mansion house and outbuildings.
Mrs. Charity Humphrey continued to occupy the house with her two small children and a governess, Susan McNeill, until 1850. On October 29, 1850, she signed a marriage contract with Henry H. Ellis of Lumberton, whereby Ellis abjured any claim to the lands of his bride, in deference to her two orphaned children, the rightful heirs to the Richard Humphrey estate. After their marriage, Ellis took upon himself the legal guardianship of his two stepchildren, Ann Eliza Humphrey (1843-1911) and William Burder Humphrey (1842-1862). Ellis thus became manager of the plantation, and he operated a small general store and post office near the house.

Charity Humphrey Ellis died in childbirth in November 1856, leaving Ellis with the two Humphrey children and four small children she had borne during her six years of marriage to Ellis. Charity Ellis's death precipitated a series of legal maneuvers which would greatly affect the future of the plantation. A marriage came about between Ann Eliza Humphrey, who was fourteen years old in 1858, and Warren Williams, a twenty-five year old physician, and Williams petitioned in 1859 for the division of the Richard B. Humphrey estate between the Williamses and William B. Humphrey in two equal portions. Henry Ellis would later sue Williams for a substantial settlement on behalf of his four children, who were legitimate heirs of their mother Charity Humphrey Ellis.

After the settlement Ellis relocated with his children to a nearby farm and later emigrated to Cleveland County, North Carolina, where he has descendants today. William B. Humphrey died intestate and without heirs in 1862, whereupon his portion of his father's estate reverted to Warren and Ann Eliza Williams. Thus Dr. and Mrs. Williams became master and mistress of the plantation for the next half century and resided there during the Civil War and Reconstruction. Before their deaths in 1911, Dr. and Mrs. Williams conveyed to their seven children large parcels of land, with some six hundred acres and the old home going to the three unmarried children, Robert, Ida, and Janie Williams. After the death of Robert Williams in 1930, Ida and Janie Williams resided with a widowed sister, Mrs. Charity Williams Gay, at the plantation. In 1935 Ida Williams oversaw extensive restoration of her grandfather's house, and she personally managed the farm with tenants and sharecroppers until her death in 1958. Ida and Janie Williams bequeathed the entire homeplace and farm to their cousin and foster son, Charles Thomas Smith (1926- ), who had come to them as a boy in 1936. Since the death of Ida Williams, Professor Smith has managed the farm and house up to the present day.
1Inventory of R. B. Humphrey Estate, December 1846, Robeson County Estate Records, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh.


3First Census of the United States, 1790: Robeson County, North Carolina, Lucy Humphrey Household.

4William Humphrey family Bible, in possession of Miss Ruth Williams, Red Springs, North Carolina (Philadelphia, 1816).

5Will of William Humphrey, February 14, 1818, Robeson County Book of Wills, State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh.


7Dower of Charity Humphrey in the estate of Richard B. Humphrey, January 3, 1848, Robeson County Deeds Book AA, p. 204.

8Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Robeson County, North Carolina, Charity Humphrey Household.

9Division of Richard B. Humphrey Estate, Robeson County Estate Records, 1858-1859, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh.

10Warren Williams and wife Ann Eliza Williams to Robert Williams, Ida Williams, and Janie Williams, Robeson County Deeds Book 5-L, p. 67, April 29, 1908.

11Will of Ida Williams, Robeson County Wills, Lumberton, N.C., probate February 9, 1959.
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
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering
Survey # __________
Record # __________

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: 555.99 (10.6 listed in original nomination) = 566.59 TOTAL ACRES

UTM References
A [117] 617.6 514.10 318.4 214.10
Zone Easting Northing
C [117] 617.8 516.10 318.4 128.10
D [117] 617.1 518.10 318.4 171.10

Verbal Boundary Description
Being the property represented in Tracts #1, 2, and 3, Robeson County Tax Map No. 12, drawn at a scale of 1" = 400'. Tract #2 has been revised in pencil to reflect the sale of the westernmost 306.21 acres along the Big Raft Swamp Creek to the Federal Paper Board Company on 10-26-87. The nominated property is outlined in red.

Boundary Justification
This acreage reflects the entire remaining property associated with the Humphrey-Williams Plantation. This 566.59 acres retains integrity of location, setting, feeling and association from the period of significance, ca. 1784-1938.

11. Form Prepared By
name/title Robert F. Doares, Jr. (transcribed onto Form 10-900 by M. Ruth Little, staff of HPO)
organization __________________________
date 1988
street & number Rt. 10, Box 28
telephone __________________________
city or town Lumberton
state NC zip code 28358
Bibliography


Journals of Richard B. Humphrey. In possession of Professor Charles Thomas Smith at the Humphrey-Williams-Smith House, Robeson County, North Carolina.

Register of Deeds, Wills and Estates Records, Robeson County Court House, Lumberton, North Carolina.

Robeson County Estate Records, Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.


United States Census Office. First Census of the United States, 1790, Robeson County, North Carolina; Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, Robeson County, North Carolina.


10. Geographical Data continued

E 17 676820 3840580
Informational Amendment to the Nominations of the Humphrey-Williams House and the Humphrey-Williams Plantation, Robeson County, N.C.

The following corrections and clarifications to the 1973 nomination of the Humphrey-Williams House and the 1988 boundary expansion of the Humphrey-Williams Plantation have been provided by Dr. Warren Williams. A fuller discussion of these points is presented in the attached letter dated January 25, 1996 from Dr. Williams to Linda Harris Edmisten, National Register Coordinator of the North Carolina Historic Preservation Office.

Original (1973) Nomination of the Humphrey-Williams House:

A. *Section 8, first paragraph following the summary paragraph:* There is no question that the house was built by Richard B. Humphrey with the labor of his slaves, headed by his carpenter, Daniel. A note written by Humphrey in February, 1846, stated that he had just completed "this house." Humphrey died on October 8, 1846, not in 1856 as stated in the nomination. (This point was corrected in the 1988 boundary expansion of the nomination.)

B. *Same paragraph as above:* The property was not sold in 1965 to Mr. and Mrs. Charles T. Smith as stated in the 1973 nomination. It was conveyed to Mr. Smith by the wills of Ida Williams in 1958 and Janie Williams in 1963. (This point was corrected in the 1988 boundary expansion of the nomination.)

C. *Section 8, second paragraph:* There is no basis for the statement that Daniel, the slave carpenter who built the Humphrey-Williams House, also built nearby Philadelphus Presbyterian Church. Church session records reveal that the builder of the church was Gilbert P. Higley, and that it was built 1858-1861.

Humphrey-Williams Plantation Boundary Expansion (1988):

D. *Section 8, second paragraph:* The last sentence repeats the error regarding the builder of Philadelphus Presbyterian Church, corrected in C above.
E. **Section 8, Page 2, first paragraph:** As Charles T. Smith is of no blood relation or legal relation to members of the Williams family, the statement that the plantation "has been conveyed through gift or inheritance in unbroken succession since Revolutionary times" is incorrect. The plantation passed out of the original family when it was conveyed to Charles T. Smith by the wills of Ida Williams in 1958 and Janie Williams in 1963.

F. **Section 8, Page 3, third paragraph:** Following the death of Robert Williams in 1930, the house was occupied by Robert Williams' brother, Shelton Brady Williams, who lived there with his family until 1936. Shelton Brady Williams restored the old house to livable condition and oversaw the farms until he moved back to his own residence and farms in 1936. Miss Ida Williams later had electricity and running water installed, but she did not "oversee extensive restoration" in 1935.

G. **Section 8, Page 3, third paragraph:** Charles T. Smith was not a cousin to Ida and Janie Williams, nor was he legally their foster son.

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination 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 meets the National Register criteria.

_________________________  13 March 1996
Signature of certifying official/title               Date