UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME
HISTORIC Pool Rock Plantation

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION
STREET & NUMBER North side of SR 1380, 1.5 miles east of the junction with NC 39

CITY, TOWN Williamsboro

STATE North Carolina

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

_ DISTRICT

_X building(s)

STRUCTURE

_SITE

OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

_PUBLIC

 Phòng

_PRIVATE

_BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

_STATUS

_OCCUPIED

_UNOCCUPIED

_WORK IN PROGRESS

_ACCESSIBLE

_PRESENT USE

_AGRICULTURE

_COMMERCIAL

_EDUCATIONAL

_GOVERNMENT

_INDUSTRIAL

_MILITARY

_NATIONAL

_PARK

_RECREATION

_RELIGIOUS

_SCIENTIFIC

_TRANSPORTATION

_TITLE

_FEDERAL

_STATE

_COUNTY

_LOCAL

_REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Vance County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Route 5, Box 62

CITY, TOWN Henderson

STATE North Carolina

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE
The house called Pool Rock is located at the end of a long gravel drive in a remote farming section of Vance County, not far from Kerr Lake. The frame house is a double, one composed of two separate dwellings, both two-story frame structures, joined back to back by a hall. The north section (now considered the rear) is a gable roof dwelling of the Federal style, and the south (front) portion is a hip roof house of the Italianate idiom characteristic of Warrenton builder Jacob Holt.

The main block of the Federal section is three bays wide and one room deep. It is covered with unmolded weatherboards, and features Federal detail of considerable refinement. The facades terminate in a handsome molded box cornice enriched with a dentil course; beneath the box cornice runs a course of small undercut modillions. The first-floor windows have been altered into double ones, but the second-floor ones are unchanged; they contain nine-over-nine sash and are framed by simple pilaster strips that carry an entablature with projecting cornice. The central entrance is similarly handled with pilaster strips and an entablature adorned with dentils: Chimneys occur at either end, built of brick laid in Flemish bond and featuring single stepped shoulders. To either side of the main block is a one-story addition. That on the west is apparently older, with such features as beaded, tapered raking cornice and nine-over-nine sash.

The interior of the main block of this older section follows a two-room plan. Finish is of typical early nineteenth century character but has some unusual features. Doors have six flat panels, doors and window frames are molded, and wainscots run beneath very wide reeded chair rail. The wainscot in the east (larger) room is particularly interesting: it is horizontally flush-sheathed but is painted and grained to resemble vertical boards. The fireplaces are adorned with handsome mantels, neither original to the house. That in the east room came from Virginia, while that in the west room came from a house at nearby Knott's Crossroads. They are in character with the other finish. The second floor has simple finish, including a low wainscot and narrow chair rail; reeded window frames with cornerblocks are also present at this level.

To the south of the early nineteenth century house, and joined to it by a two-story hallway linker, is a more ornate two-story house evidently dating from the 1850s. Three bays wide and one bay deep, standing on a slightly raised brick basement, and covered with a shallow hip roof, this house is characteristic of the distinctive blend of Greek Revival and Italinate modes popularized in the region by Warrenton builder Jacob Holt (1811-1880) and his workshop. While not documented as Holt's work, the house has the hallmarks of his large oeuvre, which includes several documented Italianate houses of the period 1855-1860. The boxiness of the house is emphasized by heavy corner posts treated as pilasters, which break out from a wide baseboard or water table and carry a broad frieze, which runs beneath the deep overhang of the roof. This rectilinear composition is enriched by abundant use of bracketed and arched decoration. Many of the motifs derive from William Ranlett's pattern book, The Architect, 1847. The roofline is accented by regularly placed, pendant brackets; smaller, simpler brackets adorn the caps of the pilasters at each corner. Windows are rectangular, with mitered, molded, broad frames, but are filled with paired arched tracery sash over four-over-four leaves. The windows are fitted with louvered blinds, which are probably original. The porch, which extends nearly across the full first story, is elaborately handled. Fluted,
square-in-section pillars occur in pairs flanking the central bay and at the rear corners, and in trios at the front corners. These are surmounted by caps featuring the same small sawn brackets as the cornerposts of the house. The posts carry a wide frieze adorned with paired brackets like the main roofline, with turned pendants. Beneath the frieze the pairs of posts are linked by sawn openwork creating a shallow ogee-like arch centered by a pendant. The porch is enclosed by a balustrade with a railing carried on a miniature arcade of balustrades meeting in arches.

The entrance is framed by a heavy molded, mitered surround and features a double door with sidelights, corner lights, and transom. Pin-wheel-like tracery (taken from Ranlett's designs) fills the circular opening in the cornerlights, and half-pinwheels occur at the ends of the transom glazing and at the tops of the sidelights. The elements are separated by heavy moldings and brackets separate the upper elements.

The shallow hip roof is interrupted by interior rear chimneys and features interior gutters a short distance from the eaves—the latter a common Holt feature notoriously difficult to maintain. The rear elevation is very plainly treated, reflecting its relationship to the original house; there are no windows, and the brackets stop abruptly after turning the corner with a token pair.

The interior, like nearly all Jacob Holt's houses, follows a central hall plan, but its addition character gives it a one-room-deep size rather than the two-room-deep format more common in Holt's work. The finish throughout is consistent and is like that of many Holt houses. Broad, robustly molded woodwork is used, much of it wood-grained or marbleized. Baseboards are wide and heavily molded, and there is no wainscot along the plastered walls. Door and window frames at the first level are heavy, mitered, and molded with heavy molded "feet", while those at the second story have symmetrically molded frames and simple cornerblocks. Window frames extend to the floor to frame a panel beneath the window. The mantels are typical of Holt's school. In the east first-story room the mantel has bracketed end blocks and pilasters and frieze adorned with panels taking a trefoil shape at the ends. Other mantels are variations on pilaster and frieze compositions. To the rear of the hall, a louvered double door leads to the linking stair hall between the two sections. The stair, which rises along the east wall of the hall, begins with winders and rises in a long single flight.

Several outbuildings are located around the house. To the southeast stands a one-story, hip roof office building contemporary with the front block of the house. Northwest of the house is a one-room log house, fashioned of oak logs joined at the corners with diamond notches; this structure was recently moved to this site from its original location near Hicks Crossroads, some six miles west. Other outbuildings include a chicken house, garage, privy, and an assortment of sheds and storage buildings. Numerous large trees surround the house to the front and sides. The house is a private residence and is no longer the seat of a working farm. The house, outbuildings, and landscaped yard fronting SR 1380 are on a parcel of land of about four and one-half acres held by two separate owners.
Located in rural Vance County, the plantation house known as Pool Rock is an interesting double house reflecting two periods of construction. The earlier section, a traditional two-story gable-roof house, was probably built for James H. Taylor about the time of his marriage to Mary Eaton in 1827. This portion has well-finished details and is one of the notable examples of the later Federal style house in the county. To the south, the present front, is a later two-story frame house, thought to have been built for Taylor's daughter Mary Elizabeth, probably at the time of her first marriage in 1853. This section is a richly decorated, well-preserved blend of the eclectic bracketed made typical of the 1850s, and it is characteristic in every detail of the work of prolific Warrenton builder Jacob Holt (1811-1880) and his workshop. Not documented as Holt's work, it is one of several Holt-type houses built as an expansion of earlier houses.

Criteria: 
(A) The house, a plantation house, is associated with the agrarian economy that dominated the northeastern Piedmont before the Civil War.

(C) The two-part house embodies distinctive characteristics of two periods of architectural development: the early nineteenth century rural version of the Federal style and the regionally prominent mid-nineteenth century Greco-Italianate idiom of Warrenton builder Jacob Holt.
The plantation house known as Pool Rock is now held with about four and a half acres, but once the plantation covered more than 1,400 acres between Little Island and Little Nut Bush creeks. (The latter creek has now been obliterated by the creation of Kerr Reservoir.) Standing on the tract is a double house connected by a hallway which represents two architectural periods. Actual construction dates are uncertain; a study of the plantation's history answers some of the questions but fails to clear the confusion completely.

Pool Rock Farm, as it was later known, took shape in the 1750s when James Mitchell of Lunenburg County, Virginia, began purchasing properties in Granville County, North Carolina. Between June of 1757 and March of 1759 Mitchell acquired 2,287 acres on both sides of Little Nut Bush Creek including the tract on which the house now stands. Owner of a total there of about 5,000 acres, James Mitchell was among the largest landowners in colonial Granville County. He gave much of his property to his children.

As early as the 1760s, Thomas Lanier of Granville County had begun purchasing property around Little Nut Bush Creek from the Mitchell children. By 1790 he had assembled a 900-acre estate on which he resided until his death in 1805. Whether he moved into an older house or built a new one is uncertain; however, a large house was necessary for his growing family. When he died in 1805 the following children were named: Lewis, William, Frances, Mary, Sarah Williams, Caty, Susannah King, Rebekah, Fanny, Elizabeth Winston, Catherine Allen, Elizabeth Robinson, and Fanny Spraggins. (Lanier was married twice which probably accounts for the duplication of the names Elizabeth and Fanny.)

Thomas Lanier provided for his old age through an arrangement with his son William in 1790. William received title to the 900 acre "Manner [sic] plantation & house" upon two conditions. Thomas and his wife were to maintain a life estate in all lands and Negroes, and William was to take care of, and provide for, his sister Mary during her natural life. Mary, born about 1789 or early 1790, was a deaf mute.

Speculation has arisen concerning whether the older portion of the present house was the home of Thomas Lanier. Lanier's house was described in the deed to his son:

Beginning at a hickory in Somervilles line North 36° to the Chimney at the south end of my Dwelling house thence by the middle Wall as a partition of Said house to the Chimney in the North end of said house. . . .

Clearly the Lanier house faced east-west, while the present structure faces north-south. Furthermore, the Lanier house stood squarely on the dividing line of his property with half going to William and half to other heirs. It is not clear that a wall, as described by Lanier, ever existed in the present older structure. Such evidence suggests that
the older portion of Pool Rock, as we know it today, was constructed sometime after 1790.

On April 15, 1800, John Taylor of Granville County paid $800 Virginia money to William Lanier for the 900 acres on Little Nut Bush "whereon Thomas Lanier at present resides." Taylor could not take possession of the property, however, until Thomas Lanier died in 1805 because of the provision for a life estate.

John Taylor was a retail merchant who specialized in the transportation and sale of spirituous liquors, particularly brandy, which earned him the local sobriquet of "Brandy" Taylor. He was also a planter who lived at Jessamine Cot in northern Granville County where he raised his two sons John C. and James H. Taylor. James married Mary Eaton of Bloomsbury Plantation in 1827 and is said to have moved into the house near Little Nut Bush Creek. (Since the only manor house for the Nut Bush Plantation known to have existed previous to the 1820s stood on the boundary line, and since John Taylor, the owner from 1800 to his death in 1837, lived on his plantation known as Jessamine Cot, the logical assumption is that the older part of the house now known as Pool Rock was constructed for James Taylor and his bride about 1827. Local tradition supports the story of a wedding gift, but there is no documentary evidence to support this conclusion.) In any event, the records suggest that the house was built between 1805 and 1827.

John Taylor's will was probated in May Court, 1837 at which time all lands and slaves were devised to sons John C. and James H. Taylor. Before his death, John Taylor had added to the Nut Bush tract so that it exceeded 1,000 acres when it passed to James. Each son also received twenty slaves valued at $8,100 per group or $16,200 total.

James Harvey Taylor and his wife Mary lived on the Nut Bush plantation a little over twenty-five years. Three daughters were born of the union: Susan (1830), Mary Elizabeth [Bettie] (1832), and Annie (1835). In August of 1853 Bettie Taylor married Phillip Thomas, her first cousin. The young couple lived with James H. Taylor and it was about this time that the newer portion of the present house was built. Presumably, James H. Taylor had the Italianate structure constructed for the newlyweds.

About a year after their marriage Phillip Thomas died suddenly, leaving Bettie a widow at the age of twenty-two. In 1855 Bettie's father moved to Ashe County and placed her in charge of the Nut Bush plantation. Later that year James H. Taylor, for natural love and affection, gave his daughter the tract of 1,162 acres.

Mary Elizabeth (Bettie) Thomas married John Winnbush in 1857 and it is also possible that the front section was built for them. Mr. and Mrs. Winnbush sold the plantation in 1862 to Mary A. L. Sharp of Norfolk, Virginia for $15,000.
Winnbushes then moved to Texas leaving the property in absentee ownership.

Mary Ann Lewis Sharp and her husband William apparently maintained their principal home in Norfolk while keeping the Nut Bush house as a summer retreat. The tradition is that the name Pool Rock came at this time. It appears that the Sharps hired a caretaker named Poole to attend to the house and grounds. On the plantation, about one-fourth of a mile from the house, is a slide molded out of the rock. Sometime between 1862 and 1886, the farm of "Old Man Poole," as he was called, and the rock slide were synonomously identified. Out of the association came the plantation name of Pool Rock. It was located in the portion of Granville County that became Vance County in 1881.

On April 30, 1886, Mary A. L. Sharp transferred the "four tracts together constitute the farm called Pool's Rock . . ." to her brother-in-law John H. Sharp of Wilmington for a nominal fee of one dollar. He and his wife Sophia seem to have used Pool Rock as a summer home just as William and Mary Sharp had done. After twenty-four years John and Sophia sold "not less than 1165 acres" to Dr. James Henry Parker of New York, New York.

Parker was an extremely wealthy man who had served as president of the New York Stock Exchange. He made some changes at Pool Rock including the addition of five bathrooms. Parker intended to use the old mansion house as the lodge for a hunting preserve which would encompass the old plantation grounds. Death cut short Parker's plans, but his widow continued to spend part of each year at Pool Rock until 1942. A Mr. Tuttle acted as overseer and resident during Julia Parker's absences.

On November 9, 1942, Julia Parker deeded a "tract in Williams township, Vance County, North Carolina, known as POOL ROCK FARM, containing 1423 acres" to Anne Jones Geary for $20,000. Instead of the hunting preserve planned by her husband, Julia Parker had operated Pool Rock as a working farm. Included in the sale were "all farming equipment now located on said farm: trucks, tractors, combines, mules, horses, and any & all tools and implements now located in the home place." Julia Parker reserved a life estate in the property.

Anne Jones Geary, who was descended from an aristocratic Charleston family, moved into Pool Rock during the stormy years of World War II. Mrs. Geary, so the story goes, became so involved in the war effort that she installed a front sidewalk of red, white, and blue bricks. A flagpole was erected on the south front (newer portion) and the flying of "Old Glory" meant that the owner was in residence. Pool Rock enjoyed the colorful antics of Anne Jones Geary for nearly a decade before John H. Zollicoffer purchased a part of the farm containing the dwelling house in 1953. Zollicoffer owned the farm for fifteen years during which time the house badly deteriorated.
In 1968, the Reverend Edward Yancey bought the dwelling house and four and one half acres from Zollicoffer. He moved his family into the older section and began to restore the home, a project still underway.

FOOTNOTES


2 Granville County Deed Book E, 252; and Deed Book F, 204. See also list of children in Mitchell's Will. Granville County Will Book 1, p. 213.

3 Many of the deeds by which Lanier acquired the property apparently were never recorded. Property descriptions later leave no doubt, however, that Lanier acquired much of Mitchell's land on Nut Bush Creek. See Thomas Lanier to William Lanier, Granville County Deed Book N, 31. For list of Lanier's children, see Granville County Will Book 6, p. 205.

4 Granville County Deed Book N, 31; and Granville County Estate Papers, Thomas Lanier.

5 Granville County Deed Book N. 31.


7 Granville County Deed Book Q, 366.

8 John Bullock Watkins, Historic Vance County and "Happy, Healthy, Hustling Henderson." Henderson: Dispatch, 1941, p. 20, hereinafter cited as Watkins, Historic Vance County.

9 Watkins, Historic Vance County, p. 20; and John Taylor's Will, Granville County Will Book 13, p. 519.

10 Granville County Marriage Bonds, State Archives, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as Granville County Marriage Bonds; and Watkins, Historic Vance County, p. 20.

11 Granville County Will Book 13, p. 519; and Granville County Estates Papers, John Taylor. See also James H. Taylor to Mary E. Thomas in Granville County Deed Book 19, p. 29.

12 This is based upon the conclusion that James moved in at the time of his marriage. Watkins, Historic Vance County, p. 20. Granville County Marriage Bonds; and Granville County Deed Book 19, p. 29. See also Seventh Census, 1850.
13 Seventh Census, 1850; and Watkins, Historic Vance County, p. 20.

14 Granville County Marriage Bonds; Watkins, Historic Vance County, p. 20; and Survey Files, Pool Rock, Survey Branch, Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.

15 Granville County Estate Papers, Phillip Thomas; and Seventh Census, 1850.

16 Seventh Census, 1850; Granville County Estate Papers, Phillip Thomas; and Granville County Deed Book 19, p. 29.

17 Granville County Deed Book 19, p. 29; Deed Book 21, p. 406; and Granville County Marriage Bonds.

18 Watkins, Historic Vance County, p. 20.

19 Watkins, Historic Vance County, p. 20. Watkins has confused William and John Sharp, but otherwise his information seems to be correct.

20 Vance County Deed Book M-13, p. 84.

21 Vance County Deed Book 52, p. 303.

22 Watkins, Historic Vance County, p. 20. This account was written while Mrs. Parker was still living at Pool Rock part time and is probably the most accurate section of the article.

23 Vance County Deed Book 228, p. 541.

24 Vance County Deed Book 228, p. 541.


9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES
(Subgroups: Deeds, Wills, Marriage Bonds, Estates Papers).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA
ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 4½ acres
UTM REFERENCES

| A  | 1|7| 3|1| 4|8|0| | 4|0| 3|7| 3|0|0| | B  | 1|7| 3|1| 5|0|0| | 4|0| 3|7| 4|0|0| |
| C  | 1|7| 3|1| 3|1|0| | 4|0| 3|7| 1|4|0| | D  | 1|7| 3|1| 3|2|0| | 4|0| 3|7| 3|0|0| |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION
The Pool Rock Plantation boundary includes a 4.25 acre parcel owned by Rev. Edward Yancey and containing the house and most outbuildings, and an additional .25 acres of a parcel held by Mr. and Mrs. William Noel which includes the plantation office building. Together these parcels include all surviving outbuildings and constitute the plantation yard fronting SR 1380. The portion owned by Rev. Yancey is the last remaining land held in conjunction with the house. The house is no longer the seat of a working farm.

11 FORM PREPARED BY
NAME/TITLE Description prepared by Catherine Bishir, Head, Survey and Planning Branch, and Michael Southern, Survey Specialist; Significance prepared by Jerry Cross, Researcher
ORGANIZATION Division of Archives and History
STREET & NUMBER 109 East Jones Street
CITY OR TOWN Raleigh
STATE North Carolina
PHONE (919) 733-4763

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION
THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   STATE   LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER.

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION ATTEST:
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE: May 11, 1978
Watkins, John Bullock. *Historic Vance County* and "Happy, Healthy, Hustling Henderson."
Pool Rock Plantation
N. side SR 1380, 1.5 miles east of jct. with NC 39.
Williamsboro vicinity
Vance County, North Carolina

UTM Reference
A--17/731480/4037300
B--17/731500/4037100
C--17/731330/4037140
D--17/731320/4037300