

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR

MULTIPLE RESOURCE OR  THEMATIC NOMINATION

Wilson County

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Woodard Family Rural Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

N & S sides Rt. 264

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Wilson

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Second

STATE

North Carolina

VICINITY OF

CODE

037

COUNTY

CODE

195

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Multiple Ownership

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Wilson County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Nash Street

CITY, TOWN

Wilson

STATE

North Carolina

**6 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Kate Ohno, Preservation Consultant to Wilson County

October 15, 1981

ORGANIZATION

Survey & Planning Branch, Division of Archives & History

DATE

(919) 733-6545

STREET & NUMBER

109 E. Jones St.

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Raleigh

STATE

North Carolina 17611

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1. William Woodard House and Farm

Paul N. Howard, Jr.  
C/O Stern, Rendelman, Isaacson, and Klepfer  
600 NCNB Building  
Box 3112  
Greensboro, NC 27402

2. William Woodard, Jr., House and Farm

S. T. Wooten  
Rt. 3  
Wilson, NC 27893

3. Woodard House and Farm

Billy D. Richardson and Dorothy S. Richardson  
Rt. 3, Box 33  
Wilson, NC 27893

4. L. P. Woodard House

Julian Ray Etheridge and Anne R. Etheridge  
Rt. 3, Box 345  
Wilson, NC 27893

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Woodard Family Rural Historic District consists of a cluster of farmhouses built by the Woodard Family on land acquired by William Woodard in the 1820s and 1830s. The district is located in eastern Wilson County in the fork of Toisnot Swamp and White Oak Swamp, and includes 550.54 acres. The land is gently rolling and the soil is fertile. Although most of the land is cleared and used to raise corn and tobacco there is also a large section of timbered land, particularly in the area of Buck Branch. The district is watered by a number of such small branches and several farm ponds are also located on the property.

The main houses in the district were built between 1830 and 1911 and are arranged east to west along the path of Rt. 264 which links the city of Wilson in the west to Greenville (Pitt County), in the east. Rt. 264 follows much the same route as the Wilson to Greenville Plank Road, completed in 1853 and an earlier stage coach route which linked Greenville, a port on the Tar River, to rural areas in which is now Wilson County.

The land included in the district was a part of William Woodard's plantation. Woodard amassed at least 1,000 acres of land in the 1820s and 1830s and it was during his ownership (ca. 1823-1847) that the area reached the peak of its prosperity. The area also benefitted substantially from the economic boom which occurred in the county at the turn of the century when William Woodard's grandchildren owned the property.

The architectural styles of the farmhouses in the district range from William Woodard's Federal plantation house to several mid-nineteenth century vernacular farmhouses to a residence designed in the Colonial Revival style. Many nineteenth and early twentieth century farm buildings survive in the district, especially notable are those associated with the William Woodard (1) and the William Woodard Jr. (2) houses. These farm buildings include packhouses, smokehouses, well shelters and tobacco barns. The Woodard Family Rural Historic District expresses the range of activities, tastes and lifestyles of one family who lived in one area for more than one hundred years.

Within the district the farmhouses and their outbuildings are the most important structures. The historical use of the land for agricultural purposes has continued in importance to date and these farmhouses and their associated buildings continue to express the character and diversity of rural life in Wilson County. Three out of the four major farmhouses were built on hills in order to better survey their respective farms. The farmhouses are all of frame construction and all are sheathed in weatherboard. The interior plans vary from hall-and-parlor to central hall and no house exceeds two stories. Porches are an important adjunct of all the houses and range from the delightful sawwork porch dating from the 1870s on the William Woodard House (1) to the Classical Revival porch on the Leonidas P. Woodard House (4) to the modest screen porch on the side elevation of the William Woodard Jr. House (2).

Most of the farm buildings in the district were built in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They are generally grouped quite

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close around their farmhouses and are built of frame and sheathed in weatherboard like the farmhouses themselves. The largest of the farm outbuildings is usually the packhouse, a large frame structure, one story tall, often with a loft under the gable roof. However big the packhouse is it is usually overshadowed by a large number of tobacco barns. The tobacco barns are tall, narrow gable roofed structures, often with a shelter built on one side. Some early log barns exist in the district, but most are frame, covered in weatherboard, asbestos or tin. Metal bulk barns are beginning to replace these tobacco barns. The farm yards lack formal arrangement, but the buildings are located with an eye to comfort and practicality. An example of this is the siting of the tobacco barns, which are filled during the hottest weather of the year. They usually stand in a grove of large shade trees that offer a natural kind of air conditioning to workers on hot days.

The farmhouses are the pivotal structures in the district and will be discussed more fully below.

According to local tradition the oldest house in the district was built for William Woodard by his brother James Bullock Woodard circa 1832 (1). The substantial three-bay two-story Federal plantation house has a one-story rear ell and a one-story gable roof addition to the front facade. Paved double-shoulder 1 to 10 common bond chimneys are located on the gable ends of the house. The chimneys are highlighted by tumbled weatherings. Tall nine-over-nine windows are found on the first floor while shorter six-over-six windows are used on the second floor. Square four-light gable windows flank the chimneys and illuminate the attic space. The house, which was originally single pile, was added to both the front and rear before William Woodard's death circa 1847. Tradition maintains that one of these additions was built to accommodate Elizabeth Woodard's herbal medicine practice. In the late nineteenth century a kitchen ell was also added to the rear. The delightful sawnwork porch was probably added in the 1870s.

On the interior a hall-and-parlor plan is followed. An enclosed stair rises from the rear of one of the front rooms. The interior of the house has been altered very little. Flat panel wainscot and mantels with raised panels supported by reeded pilasters are found in the main rooms. The doors and windows have molded three-part surrounds and many of the doors are of the six raised-panel variety. In the rear ell is located a typical mid-nineteenth century mantel with plain pilasters, Doric caps and applied diamond motifs. A built-in cupboard flanks the fireplace in this section and the cupboard appears to be of similar vintage as the mantel.

The outbuildings near the house consist of a packhouse, a barn, a crib, two smokehouses and a two-story shed. All the outbuildings are of frame construction. To the east of the main house are three simple turn-of-the-century frame tenant houses, five frame tobacco barns and an ordering pit.

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The next house to be constructed on the Woodard property was a small late Greek Revival cottage, the Woodard House (3). This cottage was manufactured from two rooms removed from the Greek Revival house built by Elder William Woodard, Sr. Elder William Woodard, Sr., built his house circa 1855 and in 1911 the two rooms from the side wings were removed along with the kitchen and moved to the present site of the house.

The three-bay, one-story Greek Revival cottage has a gable roof, squat exterior end stretcher bond chimneys with queen closers and curious overhanging enclosed gables. A one-story late nineteenth century ell with an enclosed porch is attached to the rear. The central trabeated door features octagonal panels which are repeated under the sidelights. A porch with square columns with Doric caps shelters the front facade. The windows have six-over-six sashes, but appear to be replacement windows, as are the windows on the gable ends. Aluminum siding obscures the original weatherboards. The interior of the house was not accessible.

At the rear of the house is a frame packhouse, two frame tobacco barns and a frame crib.

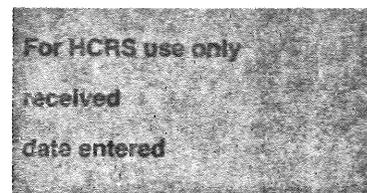
The William Woodard Jr. House (2) was the next house to be built in the district. According to family tradition this house was occupied by William Woodard, Jr. (1855-1921), but it appears to date before his occupancy, circa 1850. The William Woodard Jr. House is similar in form to the Woodard House (3) discussed above; the three-bay, one-story, single-pile farmhouse has a gable roof, a one-story kitchen/dining room ell and a one-story late-nineteenth century wing on the west elevation. Originally the main block possessed two single-shoulder stepped chimneys; one of these on the west elevation has been removed, but one straight common bond chimney remains on the east elevation. The central trabeated door has four panels outlined by semicircular molding. A porch similar to that on the Woodard House (3) once extended the length of the facade, but has been removed. The addition on the west elevation has an exposed-face single-shoulder common-bond chimney and a three-sided bay window. A screen porch extends along the rear of the addition and another porch has been enclosed along the west side of the kitchen ell.

On the interior a central hall plan is followed and simple mid-nineteenth century mantels are found in the main block. These mantels have chamfered pilasters, Doric caps and a plain heavy mantel shelf. Applied geometric-pattern molding enhances the mantel in the 1870s addition. Doors and windows, original throughout, are simply treated with the exception of the arch framing the three-sided bay in the 1870s addition. The arch is supported by small carved brackets with a trefoil motif. The breezeway which once joined the main block to the kitchen ell has been enclosed.

The farm buildings on this site show an exceptional range and include eight tobacco barns, a smokehouse, a large packhouse, a barn, a tool room,

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a shed, a latticed well house and gazebo and three early twentieth century tenant houses. All the outbuildings are of frame construction. Two of the tenant houses are located on SR 1521 and one is south of the main house on a farm path.

The most recent house in the district (4) is said to have been built by Elder William Woodard, Sr. (1830-1910) during the second half of the nineteenth century. The house was enlarged by his son, Leonidas P. Woodard, in 1911. According to family tradition the original house was a modest single-story farmhouse. Under L. P. Woodard's ownership Wilson contractor C. C. Rackley was hired to raise the house to two stories, and no sign of the older, smaller house remains today. The present house is a substantial two-story, three-bay Colonial Revival residence. A full attic with a central hipped roof dormer is also included in the house. Cross gable wings extend from both sides of the house and two large interior chimneys are symmetrically placed. A deep overhang shelters the facade, and a porch with Ionic columns, a pedimented entry, and turned balusters wraps around both sides of the house. A porte-cochere, which has lost its original columns, extends from the east side of the porch. The central trabeated door is flanked by large one-over-one windows. The house was recently aluminum sided.

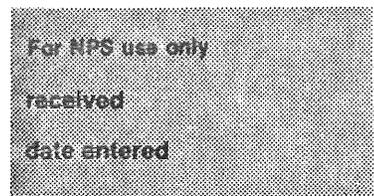
On the interior a central-hall plan is followed. An open stair rises from the front of the hall, and two rooms open off of either side. The woodwork is mainly Colonial Revival in style except for two mission style oak mantels. The doors, plus the door and window surrounds are painted heart pine, probably the product of a local millwork firm.

The outbuildings associated with this house are the least impressive of all those in the district and family tradition maintains that other farm buildings associated with this house were destroyed by Hurricane Hazel in 1954. The outbuildings consist of a barn and three storage sheds, all early twentieth century, and all built of frame.

Although taken singly no one farm complex in the district is outstanding enough to be nominated on its own, with the possible exception of the William Woodard House (1), the totality of this district makes it notable. The preservation of three generations of farmhouses, all built by the same family on the family plantation, on land which continues to be used for agricultural purposes is truly unusual. The buildings included in the district are also fine examples of Wilson County's interpretation of nationally popular styles. This district as a whole is indicative of the character of rural life in Wilson County during the periods in which it attained the greatest prosperity.

The structures in the district, of course, are 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 properties in the district. Information concerning use patterns, social standing, and mobility, as well as structural details, is often only evident in the

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archaeological record. Therefore, archaeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the district. 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 within the district boundaries.

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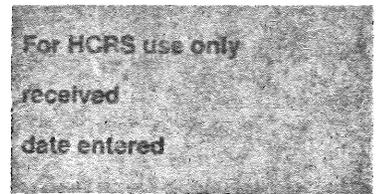
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The William Woodard House and Farm

1. The William Woodard House (ca. 1832)

A two-story, late Federal style house with a gable roof and a one-story rear ell and a one-room gable-roof addition to the front facade. Exterior end, paved, double shoulder, common bond chimneys on the main block. A one-story sawnwork porch dating from the 1870s shelters two bays of the front facade. Large nine-over-nine windows are found on the first floor with six-over-six windows on the second floor. A hall-and-parlor plan is followed with an enclosed staircase rising from the front of the house.

a. Packhouse (ca. 1870) One story frame packhouse set on tall brick piers near the road. Gable roof, six-over-six windows. Green asbestos siding.

b. Barn (ca. 1900) Large one story frame barn with equipment shelters on both sides. Loft under gable roof. May once have been a stable.

c. Crib (ca. 1900) Small one-story frame crib with gable roof. Green asbestos siding.

d. Smokehouse (ca. 1900) One story frame smokehouse with weatherboard siding. Tin roof.

e. Smokehouse (ca. 1900) One story frame smokehouse with weatherboard siding. Tin roof.

f. Shed (ca. 1930) Two story frame shed with gable roof. Weatherboarded. Farm equipment shelter built onto one side. May have originally been built as a packhouse.

William Woodard Jr. House and Farm

2. William Woodard Jr. House (ca. 1850)

A one-story gable-roof farmhouse with one surviving exterior end chimney. Rear ell and one-room wing (dating ca. 1870) projecting from the west elevation near the front of the house. Three-bay facade with a tra-beated door; central hall plan. Set in a grove of pecan trees and oriented toward Rt. 264.

a. Eight frame tobacco barns (ca. 1900), some with metal or asbestos siding and some with weatherboards. Tin roofs.

b. Smokehouse (ca. 1900) One-story frame smokehouse with gable roof and weatherboarded exterior.

c. Packhouse (ca. 1900) Large one story frame packhouse with loft and equipment shelters on both ends. Painted white.

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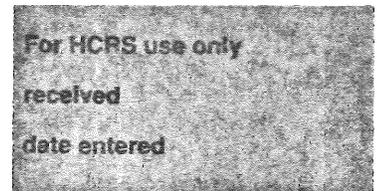
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- d. Barn (ca. 1900) One-story frame barn.
- e. Tool Room (ca. ?) One-story frame tool shed similar to smokehouse, above.
- f. Shed (ca. ?) One-story frame shed, weatherboarded.
- g. Tenant House (ca. 1900) One-story frame tenant house, gable roof, L-plan located on SR 1521.
- h. Tenant House (ca. 1920) One-story frame tenant house on farm path.
- i. Tenant House (ca. 1920) One-story frame tenant house on farm path.

Woodard House and Farm

3. Woodard House (ca. 1855)

A one-story frame house with a shallow gable roof and squat exterior end chimneys. Rear ell dating ca. 1900. Curious closed projecting gables. Front porch shelters a three bay facade and front door is trabeated.

- a. Packhouse (ca. 1900) One-story frame packhouse with asbestos siding; farm shelter of logs on south elevation. Tin roof, loft area.
- b. Two tobacco barns (ca. 1900) Frame tobacco barns with asbestos siding in field behind house.
- c. Crib (ca. 1900) One-story frame crib with tin roof next to packhouse.

L. P. Woodard House

4. L. P. Woodard House (ca. 1855; remodelled 1911)

Two-story frame Colonial Revival house with a hipped slate roof, interior chimneys, and a central dormer. Cross gable wings project from the side elevations. The three bay facade is sheltered on the first floor by a wraparound porch with Ionic columns. The front door is trabeated. A matching porte-cochere extends from the eastern elevation. Central hall plan.

- a. Barn (ca. 1890) One-story frame barn sheathed in weatherboard.
- b. Three Storage Sheds (ca. 1950) One-story frame sheds sheathed in weatherboard.

There are a total of 29 contributing nineteenth and early twentieth century dwellings and associated farm outbuildings in this nomination.

**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

\_\_\_\_ NATIONAL

\_\_\_\_ STATE

\_\_\_\_ **X** LOCAL

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES *Various*BUILDER/ARCHITECT *Unknown**Ca. 1832 - 1920s*

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Woodard Family Rural Historic District is located in the eastern section of Wilson County, which until 1855 was a part of Edgecombe County and had the largest and most productive plantations in the region. The district is in an area of many small farms, resulting from the division of land which has been in the Woodard family since William Woodard, a prosperous farmer, acquired it in 1823. The district, which encompasses 550.4 acres, is principally comprised of four farmhouses and their attendant outbuildings, all of which were built by members of the Woodard family. The farmhouses range in style from a c. 1832 Federal plantation to a substantial Colonial Revival residence remodeled in 1911 from a modest late nineteenth century dwelling. Elder William Woodard, William Woodard, Jr., and Leonidas P. Woodard, all descendents of William Woodard, were wealthy landholders by virtue of their inheritance and respected members of the community. The historical use of the land in the district for agricultural purposes has continued to date; and the farmhouses and their associated outbuildings continue to express the range of activities, tastes, and lifestyles of one family who lived in the area for over one hundred years.

## CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

- (A) Associated with the agricultural prosperity in the eastern part of present Wilson County during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Woodard Family Rural Historic District is indicative of the character and diversity of rural life in the area.
- (B) Associated with several prominent members of the Woodard family, including William Woodard, a prosperous farmer; Elder William Woodard, a Baptist preacher; William Woodard, Jr., a businessman and a deacon of the Primitive Baptist Church in Wilson; and Leonidas P. Woodard, a businessman who operated various enterprises in the vicinity of the district.
- (C) The Woodard Family Rural Historic District is principally comprised of four farmhouses ranging in style from a c. 1832 Federal plantation to a substantial 1911 Colonial Revival residence and also includes several mid-nineteenth century vernacular farmhouses. These structures, along with their associated outbuildings,

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are fine examples of Wilson County's interpretation of nationally popular styles and represent an unusual survival of three generations of farmhouses built by the same family on land which continues in agricultural use.

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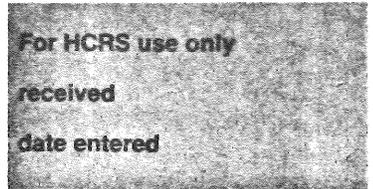
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William Woodard came from a landed family. He was the son of David Woodard, a planter of Edgecombe County. The elder Woodard died in 1798 leaving three children, James, William and Sarah.<sup>6</sup> According to his will his sons were to divide his land on the north side of Bear Branch, consisting of 347-1/2 acres.<sup>7</sup> William Woodard was born in 1795 and his father's early death, when he was only three, profoundly affected his upbringing.<sup>8</sup> According to family tradition the two boys, James and William, were taught a trade.<sup>9</sup> James was apprenticed to a builder and William to a blacksmith.<sup>10</sup> David Woodard's land was not divided until 1814.<sup>11</sup> It is not known whether William Woodard continued to follow his trade as a blacksmith as a young man, but eventually he became known as one of the most prosperous farmers in the area. When he purchased 800 acres from James B. Tartt in 1823 he was already a wealthy man, able to pay the enormous sum of \$3,200 for the land which became the core of his holdings.<sup>12</sup> It is possible that Woodard sold the land he had acquired from his father's estate to purchase the Tartt land, for there is no indication that he maintained an interest in the family lands.

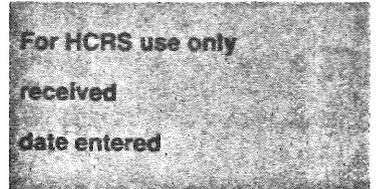
William Woodard married Elizabeth Simms who came from a prominent agricultural family in the neighborhood of Black Creek in the southern section of the county.<sup>13</sup> Woodard, according to family tradition, built his handsome plantation house on the former Tart property in 1832.<sup>14</sup> His brother, James Bullock Woodard, is said to have been the builder.<sup>15</sup> William Woodard continued to prosper, and in 1833 he purchased an additional 655 1/4 acres from James Tartt, Sr.,<sup>16</sup> and five years later, in 1838, James Tartt sold Woodard 212 acres east of Toisnot Swamp.<sup>17</sup>

In 1845 Woodard went on a visit to the state of Texas from which he never returned.<sup>18</sup> Woodard was considered dead by 1847, and his widow, Elizabeth Woodard, continued to occupy the plantation. Elizabeth Simms Woodard practiced herbal medicine and family tradition asserts that one of the rooms added to the original house was reserved for her use.<sup>19</sup> After her husband's departure and before his death was known she purchased 1,186 acres<sup>20</sup> from Elnathan Tartt, attorney for James Tartt of Sumter County, Alabama.<sup>21</sup> This land was later divided among her children. William Woodard's estate, consisting of 2,451 acres, was divided between his children Patience, William, Warren, James S. and Calvin Woodard in 1852.<sup>22</sup> Of this 2,451 acres 550.5 acres are included in the proposed district.

Elizabeth Woodard was listed as the head of household in the 1850 census. According to the census she was aged forty-six and owned real property valued at \$2,400. Included in her household were her sons Warren (age twenty-four), Calvin (age twenty-two), William (age nineteen), and James (age seventeen), all farmers, her daughter Patience (age

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fifteen) and her daughters-in-law Winifred (wife of Calvin), Delphy (wife of William) and two grand-children Mary (age 10 months) and Francis (no age given). Elizabeth Woodard is listed as owning 1,000 acres of improved land and 1,500 acres of unimproved land. The cash value of the farm is given as \$24,000 and although the farm included a wide variety of live-stock, hogs topped the list, numbering 500. The major crops were those that could be used on the farm itself. No cotton was grown, but the farm did produce 200 pounds of wool from its 80 sheep. Indian corn and sweet potatoes were raised in large quantities while smaller quantities of wheat, rye and Irish potatoes were also grown. 800 bushels of peas and beans were produced and 18 tons of hay. Sixty-seven slaves lived on the plantation.<sup>23</sup>

Of Woodard's children his four sons, William, Warren, James S. and Calvin, became prominent farmers and community leaders. William Woodard and his wife had been supporters of the Toisnot [Primitive] Baptist Church (later the Wilson Primitive Baptist Church). William Woodard became a member of this, the county's oldest and most influential church, on November 26, 1831<sup>24</sup> and his wife donated money for the new church built circa 1853.<sup>25</sup> Thus it was only natural that Woodard's children would be associated with the church. Two of his sons, James Simms Woodard and William Woodard became Baptist preachers in addition to their other duties.<sup>26</sup> Patience Woodard married Moses Farmer and lived on the five hundred acres west of the district which she received from her father's estate.<sup>27</sup> No house associated with this property has survived. Warren Woodard acquired land in Stantonsburg township upon which he lived<sup>28</sup> and James Simms Woodard moved to Wilson.<sup>29</sup> Elder William Woodard and his brother Calvin were the only two sons to remain on the property that they received from their father's estate. Calvin Woodard's house is still standing east of the district, but some distance from it on the south side of Rt. 264.<sup>30</sup> William Woodard built his own house on the south side of Rt. 264 just east of his father's plantation house. This house is discussed below.

William Woodard's son, William, most often referred to as Elder William Woodard or William Woodard, Sr., was born on November 6, 1830.<sup>31</sup> In 1849 he married Delphia Rountree<sup>32</sup> and some time thereafter he built a modest vernacular farmhouse on the south side of Rt. 264 (4). William Woodard, Sr., had inherited 450 acres of his father's prime agricultural land in the partition of 1852 and by 1853 the Wilson to Greenville Plank Road, which follows much the same route as the present Rt. 264, was completed.<sup>33</sup> Although a road had existed for a time joining Wilson and Greenville, the closest port on the Tar River, the quality of the road left much to be desired and the Plank Road briefly increased the usage of the route and the volume of goods transported to Greenville. William Woodard, Sr., was received into the fellowship of the Toisnot Baptist Church in May, 1870, and was ordained a deacon the following September.<sup>34</sup> He was liberated to preach in 1872 and ordained the following year by Elder P. D. Gold of Wilson.<sup>35</sup> He served for years as the pastor of Aycock's Church and Healthy Plains Church and was a highly respected member of the community.<sup>36</sup>

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Elder Woodard succeeded in increasing the holdings left to him by his father and at his death he owned more than 848 acres. According to the 1860 census Woodard owned real property valued at \$16,000 and personal property valued at \$24,200. His holdings in that year included 705 acres of improved land, nineteen slaves and six slaves houses. His major crops were Indian corn (4,000 bushels), cotton (137 400-lb. bales) and potatoes (600 bushels of Irish and sweet potatoes). He also produced some rice, an unusual crop in Wilson County, and thirty tons of hay. Although Woodard maintained an adequate number of work animals to cultivate the farm and to produce dairy products for his household, he also raised hogs. In 1860 his swine numbered 200, and the value of the animals he slaughtered was set at \$1,000.<sup>37</sup> Woodard, like his father, reared a family of prominent children. His daughter, Varina, married Governor Charles B. Aycock, known in North Carolina for his standardization and up-grading of schools all over the state. After Varina's death, her sister, Cora, married Aycock and raised her sister's children. When Elder Woodard died in 1910 he owned the Charles B. Aycock House in Goldsboro, which he bequeathed to his grandchildren. His children, William Woodard, Jr., Leonidas P. Woodard and Cora L. Aycock inherited his land.<sup>38</sup> William Woodard, Jr., inherited 287 acres on the south side of the Plank Road, including the William Woodard, Jr. House and Farm (2).

William Woodard, Jr., was born on December 12, 1855 and was educated at one of Wilson's most prestigious private schools, The Wilson Collegiate Institute, by Elder Sylvester Hassell, a respected and innovative educator. Woodard displayed a real aptitude for business, even as a young man, and he later became president of Woodard Brothers, wholesale grocers, and the Welfare Automobile Co. On December 12, 1877 he married Mary Ann Uzzell of Wayne County. Woodard was a deacon of the Primitive Baptist Church and chairman of the building committee for the present Wilson Primitive Baptist Church, built in 1920.<sup>39</sup> Woodard died in 1921 in Wilson at his home on West Nash Street.

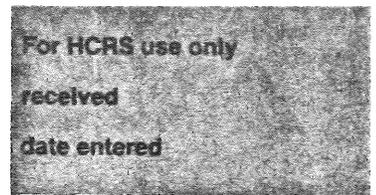
Woodard maintained ownership of the land that he had received from his father's estate and even added to it. The farm property was sold by his heirs after his death.<sup>40</sup>

Although the William Woodard, Jr. House appears to pre-date William Woodard, Jr.'s occupancy it is unclear who actually built the vernacular house. The front of the house, a single-pile central hall plan cottage, appears to date circa 1850. A wing was added to the western elevation in the 1870s and it seems likely that when William Woodard, Jr., married Mary Ann Uzzell in 1877<sup>41</sup> the house was given to Woodard by his father. The house and farm have passed through several owners since Woodard's death and are presently owned by S. T. Wooten and the house is occupied by Wooten's farm manager.

Leonidas Polk Woodard not only inherited his father's homeplace, but also his household furniture, stock, crops, farming implements and

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his interest in a steam mill on Buck Branch.<sup>42</sup> L. P. Woodard was born on March 6, 1864 and in 1893 he married Minnie B. Applewhite of Moyton in the Stantonsburg Methodist Church.<sup>43</sup> In 1892 Elder William Woodard sold his son a fifty-one acre tract adjoining the family farm on Buck Branch,<sup>44</sup> but Leonidas, and later his wife and children, continued to live in the family homeplace with his father and his second wife, "Aunt" Ellen Woodall.<sup>45</sup>

Leonidas P. Woodard inherited 325 acres of his father's land, including his father's house on the south side of the Plank Road (4).<sup>46</sup> According to a documentary photograph taken circa 1906 the house was a one-story three-bay Greek Revival cottage with a shallow hipped roof and one-room wings with exterior end chimneys on the side elevations.<sup>47</sup>

After the death of Elder Woodard, Leonidas hired Wilson contractor C. C. Rackley to remodel and enlarge his father's house. In 1911 the two one-room wings and kitchen were removed from the house and moved to a site just east of the house across the ditch. The two one-room wings were consolidated into the main block of the Woodard House (3) and the kitchen was added to the rear. A gable roof replaced the original hipped roof and the porch from the older house was used on the remodelled cottage. L. P. Woodard and his family lived in this small house "across the ditch" while Rackley raised the older house to two stories and remodelled it in the Colonial Revival style. The remodelling began in 1911 and was completed circa 1914 when L. P. Woodard moved his family back into the big house and the Woodard House across the ditch (3) became a tenant house.<sup>48</sup>

The area of the Woodard Family Rural Historic District grew more prosperous during the later years of Elder Woodard's life. By 1902 a post office, christened "Sun" was established and it continued to operate until 1907.<sup>49</sup> A one-room school house, called "Sun School" was erected at the turn of the century.<sup>50</sup> Later it was renamed "Woodard School" and eventually was replaced by Gardners School in the mid 1920s.<sup>51</sup> L. P. Woodard enjoyed the new-found prosperity of the area. He operated a cotton gin and a general store across from his father's house at Sun by the turn of the century<sup>52</sup> (both buildings have since been destroyed, but a photograph of the store, which also housed the Sun post office, remains in the hands of the Woodard family). As well as his business and farming interests at Sun Woodard also served as vice-president of the Welfare Automobile Company as early as 1912.<sup>53</sup> L. P. Woodard continued to live in his Colonial Revival style farmhouse until just before his death in 1941.<sup>54</sup> The house was occupied by his widow, and then by his son, W. M. Woodard, and his wife until the property was sold in 1945 by W. M. Woodard to W. E. and Hester H. Thomas.<sup>55</sup> Since that time the house has passed through the hands of several owners. This house was the last major house to be erected and the last house to pass out of the Woodard family in the district.

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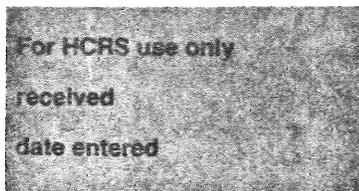
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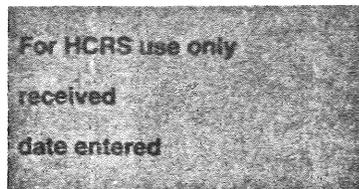


Footnotes

- <sup>1</sup>Hugh Buckner Johnston, "Earliest Land Ownership: Preliminary View of Wilson County, North Carolina", 1980, 1, unpublished manuscript available from the Wilson County Public Library, hereinafter cited as Johnston, "Land Ownership."
- <sup>2</sup>Johnston, "Land Ownership," 1.
- <sup>3</sup>Johnston, "Land Ownership," 1.
- <sup>4</sup>Johnston, "Land Ownership," 26.
- <sup>5</sup>James B. Tartt to William Woodard, July 5, 1823, Book 18, 121, Edgecombe County Deeds, Tarboro, See also Johnston, "Land Ownership," 29-30.
- <sup>6</sup>Ruth Smith Williams and Margarette Glenn Griffin, Abstracts of the Wills of Edgecombe County, North Carolina 1733-1856, (Rocky Mount, Dixie Letter Service, 1956), 371, hereinafter cited as Williams & Griffin, Edgecombe Wills.
- <sup>7</sup>Williams & Griffin, Edgecombe Wills, 371.
- <sup>8</sup>Author's interview with Wilson County Historian Hugh B. Johnston, Jr., (a Woodard descendant), hereinafter cited as Johnston interview.
- <sup>9</sup>Johnston interview.
- <sup>10</sup>Johnston interview.
- <sup>11</sup>David Woodward Land Division, August Term, 1814, Book 15, 121, Edgecombe County Deeds, Tarboro. According to the land division the Woodard property was not divided exactly as specified in the will. Lots 1 and 2 consisted of land between Bear Branch and Toisnot Swamp containing 336 acres and Lots 3 and 4 consisted of land adjoining Abner Easton containing 505 acres. Lot 1 went to James Woodard, Lot 2 to Sally Woodard, Lot 3 to William Woodard and Lot 4 to Polly Woodard, his widow.
- <sup>12</sup>James B. Tartt to William Woodard, July 5, 1823, Book 18, 121, Edgecombe County Deeds, Tarboro.
- <sup>13</sup>Johnston interview.
- <sup>14</sup>Johnston interview.
- <sup>15</sup>Johnston interview.
- <sup>16</sup>James Tartt, Sr., to William Woodard, November 15, 1833, Book 21, 22, Edgecombe County Deeds, Tarboro.

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<sup>17</sup> James Tartt to William Woodard, May 1, 1838, Book 22, 680, Edgecombe County Deeds, Tarboro.

<sup>18</sup> Elizabeth Woodard to Warren, Calvin, William, James and Patience Woodard, November 24, 1851, Book 25, 463, Edgecombe County Deeds, Tarboro.

<sup>19</sup> Johnston interview.

<sup>20</sup> In a later deed from Elizabeth Woodard to her children mentioned below the acreage of this parcel is given as 1,100 to 1,200 acres.

<sup>21</sup> Elnathan Tartt to Elizabeth Woodard, December 28, 1847, Book 24, 378, Edgecombe County Deeds, Tarboro. "Whereas William Woodard of the County of Edgecombe aforesaid about the year 1845 left his home on a visit to the state of Texas and has never returned and whereas after his departure and before his death had been ascertained Elizabeth Woodard, wife of said William Woodard purchased of one James Tartt the tract hereinafter mentioned..." See also Johnston, "Land Ownership", 31.

<sup>22</sup> Division of William Woodard Estate, February Term, 1852, Book 25, 539, Edgecombe County Deeds, Tarboro. It is uncertain whether this figure did indeed include the land Elizabeth Woodard purchased from James Tartt as the deed from Elizabeth Woodard to her children (November 24, 1851, Book 25, 463) does not mention specific tracts of land going to specific children. It is probably safe to assume that the 1,100 to 1,200 acres mentioned in the deed from Elizabeth Woodard to her children was added to the already large holdings of William Woodard's estate.

<sup>23</sup> Seventh Census of the United States: 1850, Edgecombe County, North Carolina, population, slave and agricultural schedules.

<sup>24</sup> Hugh B. Johnston, Jr., "History of Tosneot Baptist Church, 1756-1937," unpublished manuscript available at the Wilson County Public Library, hereinafter cited as Johnston, "History of Tosneot Church."

<sup>25</sup> Johnston, "History of Tosneot Church."

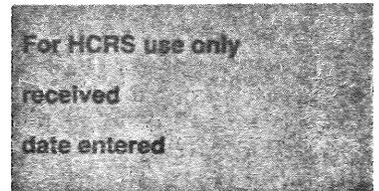
<sup>26</sup> Johnston, "History of Tosneot Church."

<sup>27</sup> Eighth Census of the United States: 1860, Wilson County, North Carolina, indicates that Patience married Moses Farmer and that Elizabeth Woodard was living with them at this date. Elizabeth Woodard owned real property valued at \$7,065 and personal property valued at \$1,100, including ten slaves. Moses farmer was apparently living on the dower tract for he owned only \$105 worth of real property and personal property valued at \$16,580, including twenty-four slaves and six slave houses.

<sup>28</sup> See nomination on the Edmondson-Woodard House.

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- 29 Wilson City Directory (Richmond: Hill Directory Company, 1908.)
- 30 Kate Ohno, Wilson County's Architectural Heritage (Wilson: 1981), 75.
- 31 Johnston interview.
- 32 Johnston interview.
- 33 Robert B. Starling, "The Plank Road Movement," North Carolina Historical Review, XVI (January 1939), 1-22.
- 34 Johnston, "History of Tosneot Church."
- 35 Johnston, "History of Tosneot Church."
- 36 Johnston interview.
- 37 Eighth Census of the United States: 1860, Wilson County, North Carolina, population, slave and agricultural schedules.
- 38 William Woodard, Sr., Will, December 3, 1892, Book 4, 374, Wilson County Wills, Wilson, hereinafter cited as William Woodard, Sr., Will.
- 39 Obituary of William Woodard, Jr., from the files of Doris Woodard, n.d., hereinafter cited as Woodard obituary.
- 40 William Woodard, Jr., Will, 1921, Book 6, 475, Wilson County Wills, Wilson.
- 41 Author's interview with Doris Woodard, wife of William Moses Woodard, September 9, 1981, hereinafter cited as Doris Woodard interview. William Woodard, Jr., married Mary Ann (Molly) Uzzell in 1877 according to family records.
- 42 William Woodard, Sr., Will.
- 43 Wilson County Vital Statistics records.
- 44 William Woodard, Sr., to L. P. Woodard, December 3, 1892, Book 31, 522, Wilson County Deeds, Wilson.
- 45 Doris Woodard interview. According to Mrs. Woodard Elder Woodard married Ellen (Woodall?) some time after 1892 when Delphia Rountree died. No issue came from this marriage and "Aunt" Ellen (as she was called by the family) returned to her own people who lived around Smithfield or Dunn after the death of her husband in 1910. There is no record of their marriage in Wilson County. See also Twelfth Census of the United States: 1900, Wilson County population schedule, p. 56.

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<sup>46</sup> William Woodard, Sr., Will.

<sup>47</sup> Photograph in the possession of Doris Woodard, West Vance Street, Wilson.

<sup>48</sup> Doris Woodard interview.

<sup>49</sup> A. Nixon, North Carolina Yearbook and Business Directory (Raleigh: 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906 & 1907).

<sup>50</sup> Charles L. Coon Collection of annotated photographs of Wilson County churches and schools, circa 1925, available at the Wilson County Public Library, hereinafter cited as Coon Collection.

<sup>51</sup> Coon Collection.

<sup>52</sup> A. Nixon, North Carolina Yearbook and Business Directory (Raleigh: 1902 & 1906).

<sup>53</sup> Wilson City Directory (Richmond: Hill Directory Company, 1912).

<sup>54</sup> Doris Woodard interview.

<sup>55</sup> W. M. Woodard to W. E. and Hester Thomas, September 12, 1945, Book 307, 336, Wilson County deeds, Wilson.



The economy of Wilson County has traditionally been based on agriculture, and the eastern section of the county, formerly a part of Edgecombe County (until 1855), boasted of the largest and most productive plantations. One of these plantations was begun in the 1820s in the fork of Toisnot Swamp and White Oak Swamp by William Woodard. Woodard used his land for the production of naval stores, corn and cotton, and his farm prospered during the antebellum period allowing him to purchase more land and expand his farming operations. Today the Woodard Family Rural Historic District is an area of many small farms, resulting from the division of Woodard's land among his children and later the division of land between his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The introduction of flue-cured tobacco as a cash crop in the Wilson County area in the late nineteenth century assured a new era of prosperity for the residents of the district, and the most ambitious house there was built in the early twentieth century as a direct outgrowth of this successful tobacco economy. Farming is still the major occupation of most of the residents, thus the district retains its rural character. The farmhouses and their associated agricultural buildings have changed little since the early twentieth century. Some modern bulk barns have been added, but the traditional tobacco barns still stand in their accustomed places. The district illustrates the evolution of architectural styles in Wilson County over a period of years as well as the agricultural basis of this thriving county.

The land which now makes up the Woodard Family Rural Historic District was originally part of one of the Lewis Conner patents granted in 1730.<sup>1</sup> Conner and his descendants never lived on their land in what is now Wilson County, and Conner's son sold 10,000 acres to David Meade of Nansemond County, Virginia, on September 24, 1753.<sup>2</sup> Meade's son eventually sold this property to Jonathan Tart (also spelled Tartt) in 1774.<sup>3</sup> The Tartt family was the first to actually live on the land and cultivate it. In 1789 Jonathan Tart bequeathed "the home plantation" and all his land south of Toisnot Swamp to his son James Tart.<sup>4</sup> Some of the Tart's extensive holdings were first sold to William Woodard in 1823.<sup>5</sup>

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- 1) Edgecombe County Deeds, Edgecombe County Courthouse.
- 2) Eighth Census of the United States: 1860. Wilson County, North Carolina.
- 3) Johnston, Hugh B. "Earliest Land Ownership: Preliminary View of Wilson County, North Carolina." Unpublished manuscript in the Wilson County Public

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 550.4 acres

UTM REFERENCES See continuation sheet also.

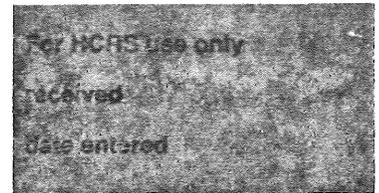
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### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The proposed Woodard Family Historic District, outlined in red on the enclosed map, is comprised of land which has been in the Woodard family since 1823. The properties included in the district possess houses and outbuildings constructed by three generations of the Woodard family and are linked by their proximity and visual continuity.

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