

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

**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 Scotch Hall

and/or common

2. Location

street & number E. Side SR 1511 4.1 Mi. E of jct W/SR 1534 not for publication

city, town Merry Hill vicinity of congressional district 1

state North Carolina code 37 county Bertie code 015

3. Classification

| | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use |
| <input type="checkbox"/> district | <input type="checkbox"/> public | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum |
| <input checked="" 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 | Public Acquisition | Accessible | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object | <input type="checkbox"/> in process | <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 Mr. and Mrs. George Washington Capehart

street & number Scotch Hall

city, town Merry Hill vicinity of state North Carolina

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Bertie County Courthouse

street & number King Street

city, town Windsor state North Carolina

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title _____ has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date _____ federal state county local

depository for survey records _____

city, town _____ state _____

7. Description

| | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
| X <u>excellent</u> | <u>deteriorated</u> | <u>unaltered</u> | X <u>original site</u> |
| <u>good</u> | <u>ruins</u> | X <u>altered</u> | <u>moved</u> date _____ |
| <u>fair</u> | <u>unexposed</u> | | |

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Dramatically situated on a bluff overlooking Batchelors Bay and the Albemarle Sound, Scotch Hall stands in a large yard with many shade trees and a box-wood alley leading from the house to the water. The landside of the house is approached from the highway by a long tree-lined lane. The immediate front yard of the house is defined by a plank fence which replaced a picket fence. At one time a smokehouse and dairy, both frame structures with pyramidal roofs, stood in the corners of the fence forming a small forecourt to the house. Scotch Hall sits among 200 acres of wood and farm land in an isolated region of Bertie County on a peninsula formed by Salmon Creek, the Cashie River, and the Albemarle Sound.

Built ca. 1838, the house is a large two-and-a-half story frame structure, five bays wide and four deep, beneath a gable roof. The fenestration of the first floor is of nine-over-nine sash, while that of the second floor is six-over-six; the sash of the side elevations are narrower by one lite. All openings are trimmed with mitred two-part architrave molding. The house is covered with beaded siding, and two paved double-shoulder chimneys of common-bond brickwork with free standing stacks appear at each end of the house.

The north or land facade of the house features a wide box cornice with curved modillion blocks. A small pedimented porch, with its original plaster ceiling and supported by two Tuscan columns, shelters the entrance. The doorway features paired raised four-panel doors beneath a large transom with diamond-shaped panes. The south side of the house is identical except for a shed porch with six Tuscan columns which runs the width of the house. A small pedimented porch between the chimney at the east end was enclosed in the mid-1960s for closets and a bath. At the west end a shed porch was made into a modern kitchen; a wing, containing a den and laundry facilities was attached to this at the same time.

The plan of the house consists of a center hall flanked on either side by two rooms, but the hall is offset to the east allowing the rooms on the west to be slightly larger than the other two rooms. The open dog-leg stair runs up the east wall toward the north before turning over the doorway. The stair features a simply turned newel, square balusters, and scrolled brackets.

The parlor and dining room on the west side of the hall open en suite by large sliding doors which have an unusual history. According to family tradition, George Washington Capehart made a visit to Louisiana while the house was being built. Upon his return, he found that the workmen had placed the two large doors on hinges rather than on tracks to slide between the walls. The doors were so large that in order to open or close them, the dining table could not be kept in the center of the room. Consequently, an open frame was built on either side of the doorway in the dining room; the doors now slide into this frame.

8. Significance

| 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 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 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/ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> art | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> music | <input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> theater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> communications | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> invention | | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |

Specific dates (1838)

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Scotch Hall was built in 1838 by George Washington Capehart, the son of Cullen Capehart. The Capeharts operated the largest plantation in Bertie County and one of the largest in the state; it consisted of 8,000 acres worked by nearly 300 slaves. Scotch Hall formed the setting of the 1851 novel, Bertie, written by George Higby Throop, a former tutor of the Capehart children. The house continues to be the home of the Capehart family, and is furnished with many pieces of furniture and portraits which have been in the house since its construction.

CRITERIA:

- A. Associated with one of the largest agricultural plantation units of antebellum North Carolina.
- B. Associated with the lives of Cullen Capehart (d. 1866) and George Washington Capehart (d. 1885), wealthy planters of Bertie County.
- C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of the antebellum plantation home of a wealthy family; it also provides a handsome example of vernacular architecture of the Federal-to-Greek Revival transitional period.
- D. Is likely to yield information important in the history of the early settlement of Bertie County as well as to provide information on the activities of a large plantation household.

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet Historical Description Item number 8 Page 1

The interior of the house is consistently finished with two-part architrave trim, a beaded and molded chair rail, and raised six-panel doors with their original brass hardware. The mantel pieces, although simple, are the only elements of the woodwork reflecting the influence of the Greek Revival style. The dining room mantel consists of a plain surround beneath a frieze with a Greek fret supporting the shelf. The parlor mantel has a surround of rounded members joined by cornerblocks beneath a plain frieze and molded shelf. The other mantels of the house have fluted pilasters supporting a plain frieze and shelf.

The plan and trim of the second floor follows that of the first floor; the south end of the hall has been partitioned into two baths.

Historic Architecture Research measured drawings of the house by John Hitch may be found at the School of Design, North Carolina State University, Raleigh.

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Historic Significance

Item number 8

Page 1

The site overlooking Albemarle Sound where George Washington Capehart chose to build his house, Scotch Hall, in 1838 has long been inhabited. William Maule, member of the Colonial Assembly and the colony's Surveyor General, left his wife the plantation called Scots Hall at his death in 1726.¹ The property was next owned by James Lockhart (1699-1753); it is thought Lockhart built the small Flemish bond brick house which stood into the twentieth-century in the front yard of the present Scotch Hall.²

The property was held by various other families until 1811, when Cullen Capehart purchased the Scotch Hall site and other tracts of land on a peninsula in Bertie County formed by Salmon Creek, the Cashie River, and Albemarle Sound; eventually he owned 8,000 acres of land.³ Cullen Capehart's plantation home was Avoca, situated north of his son George Washington Capehart's home, Scotch Hall. According to family tradition, George Washington Capehart began construction of the house in 1838 and then left on a trip to Louisiana to visit his Martin and Pugh relatives, returning to find the house completed.⁴ Although Cullen and George Washington Capehart maintained separate households, it would seem they worked their extensive plantations in partnership.⁵ At the time of the 1850 Census, Cullen Capehart owned 4,965 acres of land valued at \$48,800 on which his 203 slaves raised 8,500 bushels of corn, 200 bales of ginned cotton, and livestock worth \$4,000.⁶ By contrast, George Washington Capehart only owned 421 acres valued at \$15,000 on which his 29 slaves raised only 150 bushels of corn, 500 bushels of peas, 400 bushels of sweet potatoes, and livestock worth \$1,450.⁷ A decade later, Cullen Capehart's holdings had increased to 8,000 acres valued at \$100,000 on which his 258 slaves produced 17,000 bushels of corn, 3,000 bushels of peas, 425 bales of ginned cotton, and livestock worth \$8,500.⁸ George Washington Capehart possessed 1,200 acres of land valued at \$16,600 and 39 slaves, but raised only livestock worth \$2,700.⁹ According to county tax records, in 1862 George Washington Capehart paid taxes on 1,301 acres valued at \$11,580, 39 slaves worth \$13,309, a pleasure vehicle valued at \$400, and furniture worth \$400.¹⁰ In addition to their plantation, the Capeharts also operated a fishery off Batchelors Bay in the Albemarle Sound.¹¹

During the late 1840s, George Washington Capehart hired a young Northern tutor, George Higby Throop, to educate his children at Scotch Hall. Returning north after his stay at Scotch Hall, Throop recorded his experiences in an autobiographical novel entitled Bertie; or Life In The Old Field, published in 1851 under the pseudonym Capt. Gregory Seaworthy.¹² In his novel, Throop gave a description of not only the house, but also of the activities of its inhabitant, that is worth quoting at length:

I paused a moment at the gate for a view at the old family mansion. The northern front is not nearly so attractive as the southern. The trees which had been recently planted, at my last visit, were now finely grown; and it was evident that another month

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Historic Significance

Item number

8

Page

2

would make the spacious lawn one of the most beautiful spots in the world. The house was large, painted white, and furnished with dark-green shutters. Huge chimneys were built at both ends outside the house; and, on the northern side, a broad piazza, supported by half a score of columns, extended along the whole length. A hospitable deal bench ran along the weather boarding; and at one end of the piazza was a sort of shelf attached to the balustrade, on which a neat unpainted bucket, with shining hoops and bail of brass, was always standing. In a hole of this same shelf, fitted for the purpose, was the ewer; and near this, on a roller, was a towel white as the snow. Through the center of the building ran a hall, some ten or twelve feet in width. I may be permitted to say here, for the benefit of my northern reader, who may not have seen the south, that, for three-fourths of the year, the hall and the porch of a southern mansion are in constant requisition. You sit, lounge, or take your siesta in either. Both, but more commonly the piazza, serve you for your promenade. In the hall you very frequently see the appliances for sporting--guns, belts, pouches, horns--while on the walls you will perhaps see engravings of celebrated horses. In the piazza, the dogs consider themselves privileged; and even the hounds sometimes intrude. The youngsters romp there; and there the hobby-horse performs his untiring gallop.¹³

During the Civil War, the Capeharts left the house in the care of a local family, the Smiths, in order to escape from Union Army activities in the Albemarle Sound area; Union troops visited the plantation several times during the war.¹⁴ At Cullen Capehart's death in 1866, George Washington Capehart received half of the property, and George Washington's daughter, Susan, received the other half.¹⁵ After the Civil War, George Washington continued operating the plantation and fishery until his death in 1885. Scotch Hall was inherited by his daughter, Mrs. Susan Martin Capehart (she had married a Capehart cousin), and then by her son George Washington Capehart II. The present owner, George Washington Capehart, III, inherited the house in 1979 from his mother, the widow of George Washington Capehart, II. The house is still furnished with the furniture that George Washington Capehart purchased in 1834 from his uncle, Elisha Rhodes, of Windsor; a portrait of George Washington Capehart hangs in the parlor.¹⁶

Scotch Hall provides a remarkably unchanged example of a large plantation home in eastern North Carolina. Built in 1838, the house exhibits an early appearance of the center-hall, double-pile plan that became more typical in the regional architecture in the two decades before the Civil War. With only occasional stylistic references to the Greek Revival style, the house characterizes the strength and influence of the Federal style in rural North Carolina well into the nineteenth century.

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Historic Significance

Item number 8

Page 3

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

NOTES:

¹John Cheney, Jr., North Carolina Government, 1585-1974 (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of the Secretary of State, 1975), p. 17; p. 21; p. 35; p. 58; J. Bryan Grimes, North Carolina Wills and Inventories (Raleigh: Edward & Broughton, 1912), p. 303.

²Marilu Burch Smallwood, Some Colonial and Revolutionary Families of North Carolina, Vol. II (N.p.: n.p., 1969), pp. 398-99. One corner of the foundation of the house, as well as a depression in the ground, mark the site of the house. The present owner of the house remembers as a child playing among more substantial ruins. The Capehart family is in possession of a photograph of the house before its destruction, author's interview with Mr. and Mrs. George W. Capehart, III, 19 June 1980, hereinafter cited as Capehart interview.

³William H. Green to Cullen Capehart, 6 August 1811, Bertie County Deeds, Office of the Register of Deeds, Bertie County Courthouse, Windsor, Book V, 545, hereinafter cited as Bertie County Deeds.

⁴Capehart interview.

⁵George Washington Capehart would not receive legal title to his lands until his father's death in 1866.

⁶Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Bertie County, North Carolina Slave Schedule, 469; Agricultural Schedule, 253 microfilm of National Archives manuscript copy, Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville; subsequent census figures were taken from this microfilm.

⁷Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Bertie County, North Carolina, Population Schedule, 7, 39; Slave Schedule, 420; Agricultural Schedule, 253.

⁸Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: Bertie County, North Carolina, Slave Schedule, 123; Agriculture Schedule, 11.

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Historic Significance Item number 8

Page 4

⁹Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: Bertie County, North Carolina, Slave Schedule, 125; Agricultural Schedule, 11.

¹⁰United States History Class, 1975-76, Roanoke Chowan Academy, compilers, "Salmon Creek District," Confederate Tax Census for Bertie County, North Carolina, 1862 (Windsor, N.C.: Roanoke Chowan Academy, 1976) p. 2.

¹¹Laura Harrell, "Capehart's Fishery Era Recalled At Spring Historical Meeting," The Chronicle of the Bertie County Historical Association, XVII (Spring, 1969), 1-2.

¹²Capt. Gregory Seaworthy (George Higby Throop), Bertie: Or, Life In The Old Field. A Humorous Novel (Philadelphia: A. Hart, 1851).

¹³Seaworthy, Bertie, pp. 69-70.

¹⁴Capehart Interview; letters written between the Smiths and the Capeharts documenting this are still at Scotch Hall; The Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, has microfilmed these.

¹⁵Will of Cullen Capehart, 8 April 1862, probated 1866, Bertie County Wills, Office of the Clerk of Court, Bertie County Courthouse, Windsor, Book H, 185.

¹⁶Elisha A. Rhodes to George W. Capehart, 27 October 1834, Bertie County Deeds, Book DD, 234, "house and lot in Windsor where George W. Capehart now resides with kitchen and appurtenances and all furniture."

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet, "Bibliographical References," item 9, p. 1

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property approx. 17 acres

Quadrangle name Westover

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

| | | | |
|---|------|-------------|---------------|
| A | 1 8 | 3 4 5 9 3 0 | 3 9 8 2 4 4 0 |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing |

| | | | |
|---|------|-------------|---------------|
| B | 1 8 | 3 4 6 1 8 0 | 3 9 8 2 1 0 0 |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing |

| | | | |
|---|-----|-------------|---------------|
| C | 1 8 | 3 4 6 1 8 0 | 3 9 8 2 0 0 0 |
|---|-----|-------------|---------------|

| | | | |
|---|-----|-------------|---------------|
| D | 1 8 | 3 4 5 8 0 0 | 3 9 8 2 2 2 0 |
|---|-----|-------------|---------------|

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| E | | | |
|---|--|--|--|

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| F | | | |
|---|--|--|--|

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| G | | | |
|---|--|--|--|

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| H | | | |
|---|--|--|--|

Verbal boundary description and justification The property included in the Scotch Hall nomination represents that portion of a large plantation still immediately attached to the house and includes the lane to the house as well as the site of earlier outbuildings; the boundary begins at the junction of NC SR 1511 with the west fork of the private drive to the house

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

| state | code | county | code |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| | | | |
| | | | |

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Marshall Bullock, Consultant to the Mid-East Commission, Survey & Planning Branch

organization Archeology & Historic Preservation Section date August 1980

N.C. Division of Archives & History

street & number 109 East Jones Street telephone 919-733-6545

city or town Raleigh state North Carolina

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Angie E. ...*

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 16 October 1980

| | |
|---|------|
| For HCRS use only I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register | date |
| Keeper of the National Register | date |
| Attest: Chief of Registration | date |

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Bibliographical Reference Item number 9 Page 1

- Author's interview with Mr. and Mrs. George W. Capehart, III, 19 June 1980; notes in the working file on Scotch Hall, Survey and Planning Branch, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.
- Bertie County Deed Books, Office of the Register of Deeds, Bertie County Courthouse, Windsor.
- Bertie County Wills, Office of the Clerk of Court, Bertie County Courthouse, Windsor.
- Cheney, John, Jr. North Carolina Government, 1585-1974. Raleigh; North Carolina Department of the Secretary of State, 1975.
- Eighth United States Census, 1860, Bertie County, North Carolina, microfilm of National Archives manuscript copy, Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville.
- Grimes, J. Bryan. North Carolina Wills and Inventories. Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, 1912.
- Harrell, Laura. "Capehart's Fishery Era Recalled at Spring Historical Meeting," The Chronicle of the Bertie County Historical Association. XVII. Spring, 1969.
- Seaworthy, Capt. Gregory. (George Higby Throop). Bertie: Or, Life In The Old Field. A Humorous Novel. Philadelphia; A. Hart, 1851.
- Seventh United States Census, 1850, Bertie County, North Carolina, microfilm of National Archives manuscript copy, Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville.
- Smallwood, Marilu Burch. Some Colonial and Revolutionary Families of North Carolina, vol. II, N.p.: n.p., 1969.
- United States History Class, 1975-76, Roanoke Chowan Academy, Compilers. Confederate Tax Census for Bertie County, North Carolina, 1862. Windsor, N.C.: Roanoke Chowan Academy, 1976.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Geographical Data

Item number 10

Page 1

and continues along the east side of SR 1511 for approximately 273 yards to the junction of SR 1511 with the east fork of the drive where the line runs in a straight line to the southeast for approximately 444 yards to reach the Albemarle Sound where it then runs southwest along the beach for approximately 205 yards before turning to the northwest in a straight line approximately 342 yards to reach its origin.

Scotch Hall
BERTIE Co, NC



APPRX. 17 ACRES

NC SR 1511

Unpaved Drive

Scotch Hall

BARN

ALBEMARLE Sound



