

State of North Carolina
Division of Archives and History

Chatham COUNTY

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR

Pittsboro QUAD

Chatham County

MULTIPLE RESOURCE OR THEMATIC NOMINATION

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Lewis Freeman House

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

205 West Salisbury Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Pittsboro

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

4th

VICINITY OF

STATE

North Carolina

CODE

37

COUNTY

Chatham

CODE

37

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 type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input checked="" 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
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Jane Pyle

STREET & NUMBER

205 West Salisbury Street

CITY, TOWN

Pittsboro

STATE

VICINITY OF North Carolina

27312

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Chatham County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Pittsboro

North Carolina

STATE

6 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Ruth Seiden-Sturgill

ORGANIZATION

Consultant for Survey and Planning Branch

DATE

March 1, 1982

STREET & NUMBER

Archives and History

TELEPHONE

(919) 733-6545

CITY OR TOWN

Raleigh

STATE

North Carolina

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" 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		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located on what was sometimes referred to as the "main street" or the Main Salisbury Road, the Lewis Freeman House grew from a one-story two-bay frame dwelling into a three-bay late-nineteenth century cottage with a projecting wing and a sawn-work porch. Standing today behind the cover of a variety of old trees and shrubs, the original two-bay core of the Freeman House is trimmed with a box cornice and is surmounted by a gable roof with flat rake boards. The windows of this early section have been enlarged and now contain two-over-two sash set into late-nineteenth century architraves.

An early one-room addition with a slightly lower roof and exterior end chimney was built onto the west side of the early core. The addition of this room is apparent in the attic where the weatherboards of the early gable function as the east wall of the later structure. On the west side of the addition the chimney, notable for its stone and clay base and brick neck, is flanked on the first floor by nine-over-six sash windows set into late-nineteenth century architraves. A four pane light cuts the gable which is shadowed by the off set stack of the chimney and finished with flat rake boards. The pitch of this gable roof was altered to accomodate a room to the rear.

In the 1890s a one-bay projecting wing with a gable roof was added to the west side of the facade. This addition was accented by a raking cornice with returning eaves and created an irregular plan more in keeping with the contemporary taste of the Queen Anne style. A shed-roof porch with turned posts, and sawn detailing was extended from the projecting wing across the early front. The use of a sawn pendant border and foliated brackets links this detailing with the Pittsboro mill yard of Bennett Nooe, Jr. Similar motifs were used on the porches of the Terry-Hayes House, 309 Hillsboro Street and the house at 100 Small Street. The present owner has recently added a cross-gable wing to the rear. This ell is not apparent from the street and is quite sympathetic to the original design.

The interior of the Lewis Freeman House bears evidence of its many alternations. The narrow central hall, with its enclosed staircase leading from the rear to the attic, is an obvious addition to the original one-room plan. Little trace of this earliest interior remains. Although it has seen considerable change during the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries the early annex displays a sheathed ceiling, and both board and batten and six-panel doors.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

____ NATIONAL

____ STATE

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 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 type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input 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

Unknown

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built sometime between 1811 when Lewis Freeman began his acquisition of town property and 1837 when he is known to have resided there, the Lewis Freeman House was the home of Pittsboro's most successful early black settler. Augmented over the years with three major additions, the original one-room structure represents the modest home of a free Negro in Pittsboro before the town's first period of substantial growth in the 1830s. During the 1850s the house was the boyhood home of Dr. Matthias M. Marshall, the son of a Pittsboro cabinetmaker and for thirty-three years the rector of Christ Church in Raleigh.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

- A. The Lewis Freeman House provides a valuable insight into the character of the early nineteenth century town of Pittsboro which provided economic opportunity for free Negro settlers before the area's expansion in the 1830s.
- B. The house is associated with the life of Lewis Freeman, a free Negro who from 1811 to 1837 acquired sixteen town lots and who must be considered one of the town's important early landholders. During the 1850s the house was the boyhood home of Dr. Matthias M. Marshall, the son of a Pittsboro cabinetmaker and for thirty-three years the rector of Raleigh's prestigious Christ Church.
- C. The Lewis Freeman House is one of only four buildings in the town of Pittsboro which dates from the earliest period of settlement. This modest dwelling which began as a one-room structure is typical of the elemental house-type used along North Carolina's frontier and serves as an invaluable part of the town's important cross-section of nineteenth-century buildings.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Built sometime between 1811 when Lewis Freeman began his acquisition of town property and 1837 when he is known to have resided there, the Lewis Freeman House was the home of Pittsboro's most successful early black settler and is one of three surviving dwellings owned by ordinary citizens during the town's initial period of settlement.¹ This modest dwelling, which began as a one-room structure, is an invaluable part of the town's important cross-section of early nineteenth-century buildings and serves as a rare historical record of early town life. The single-room form was the common, elemental house-type used by the frontier settlers as they pushed their way across North Carolina.² Building practices were slow to change and this basic house plan persisted in the developing towns.

Very little is known of the life and people of the town of Pittsboro in the early years before the area's first important period of development in the 1830s. The absence of tax records, town commissioners' records, church records, newspapers, and maps has done much to hinder the study of the town during this period of initial settlement. Records have traced the arrival of several wealthy families from the coast who established summer homes and even permanent residences in the outlying country side but very little is known of the people who inhabited the town of Pittsboro. A few prominent town leaders such as Patrick St. Lawrence, who established an inn on the courthouse square, have maintained a level of recognition but most have not. There was, however, life and a considerable amount of building activity in Pittsboro during this period. The only surviving county tax list which includes the town reveals that of the 125 lots in the original plan, twenty-one were improved in 1815.³ The number of buildings in the town probably did not change very much until the growth of the 1830s. The Lewis Freeman House is one of only four buildings in the present town which dates from this earliest period of settlement and it provides a rare glimpse into the life of one of Pittsboro's common citizens.

A glance today at Pittsboro's quiet residential streets completely misses the rugged frontier spirit of this piedmont town during the beginning of the nineteenth century. There developed, concurrent with the town's establishment, a democratic character which was bred out of sheer necessity. The tradespeople who were drawn to this rural outpost had to rely on each other for help and a sense of community. Even the more socially prominent settlers from the coast were compelled to accept the new order of the interior. Pittsboro's town records corroborate the historical evidence that free Negroes played an important role in the early nineteenth century development of many North Carolina towns. Prior to 1830 manumission was a fairly common practice and although restrained by certain legal restrictions, the

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Chatham County Records. Chatham County Courthouse.
Pittsboro, North Carolina. Subgroup: Deeds, Wills.

Hadley, Wade. Chatham County 1771-1971. Durham: Moore Publishing, Co., 1976.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1/2 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	17	61645190	3054370	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All of Lot 6 Block 11 Map 10 Pittsboro Township, Chatham County Tax Map.

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

OMB 1024-0018

EXP

12-31-84

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Continuation sheet Lewis Freeman House

Item number 8

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free Negroes had definite rights. Ownership, transfer and descent of property were among the most important of these prerogatives. While most free Negroes were farmers, many were drawn to town life. Lewis Freeman like so many other industrious settlers saw an amount of opportunity in the early town of Pittsboro and he established himself by investing in real estate. Freeman's trade is unknown but as early as 1811 he had acquired four town lots and the 1815 tax list credited him with two more.⁴

The 1815 tax list for Chatham County also revealed that one of Freeman's lots was improved. While in some areas of North Carolina which were especially influenced by the English tradition of construction, a sixteen by sixteen foot square building qualified as an improvement, area records suggest that Pittsboro deviated from this pattern. Perhaps influenced by the early Scotch-Irish and German settlers, one set of town regulations required a structure at least "twenty feet long, sixteen feet wide, and ten feet pitch."⁵ It can not be said with any certainty that the Lewis Freeman House was the improvement mentioned in 1815. However, by 1837 the four acre block on West Salisbury Street was clearly described as "the Lot on which said Lewis Freeman now lives & embracing the whole square with the exception of the Tanyard Lot."⁶ It was here that Lewis Freeman, who was described in the 1830 federal census as a free Negro between fifty and sixty years old, lived with his wife and his two children.⁷

While Freeman seems to have been a man of some relative means it is not unlikely that he would have lived in a one-room house during these early years of the town's development. Two other of Pittsboro's earliest houses from this period appear to have developed from a one-room plan. In fact one of these homes, the Womack-Brower House, was the tanner's residence next door to Lewis Freeman. The one-room house has been identified as the most commonly employed structure along the state's frontier.⁸ Heated by one exterior end chimney, the house generally contained a small second-story loft reached by a ladder or boxed-in staircase. Because the building tradition was slow to change this pioneer-oriented house-type continued to be built in the early towns. Here, after the initial settlement, the one-room house was often converted into an out building or, as in the case of the Lewis Freeman House, was encased in additions.⁹ In fact the buildings earliest addition may even date from Freeman's ownership.

At the time of his death in 1843, Lewis Freeman left his wife Creecy their residence, sixteen town lots, twenty acres of land in the county, a cow, a horse and both household and kitchen furniture. It would appear that Creecy Freeman died shortly after her husband and under the provisions of Lewis Freeman's will the property was then left to John Thompson.¹⁰ John Thompson appeared in the 1850 census as a white farmer with a wife and two school-age children who lived outside the town of Pittsboro.¹¹ The executor of Lewis Freeman's will, Thompson also owned land adjoining Freeman's twenty acres in the county.¹² Why Freeman's land was left to Thompson and not Lewis Freeman's son Waller is not known.¹³

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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Continuation sheet

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The 1850 census also provides an interesting look at the character of the neighborhood along Salisbury Street. The area was inhabited by a number of tradesmen, including a tailor, a brickmason and two shoemakers, who owned or rented their modest homes. The Lewis Freeman House was rented by a thirty-eight year old cabinet-maker named Abel Marshall.¹⁴ Marshall, his wife Delana and their two sons Matthias and John resided here and established a strong family connection with the small house. It is not known whether the Marshalls continued to inhabit the house after 1855 when John Thompson sold the property to Thomas S. Yarbrow.¹⁵ Four years after the sale, the title was transferred from Yarbrow to John T. Mallory, a local barkeeper.¹⁶

In 1861 following the death of her husband, Delana Marshall married a cabinetmaker by the name of Green Brewer and the couple had two children, William Thomas and Laura Hanks.¹⁷ The chain of title for the Freeman House is unclear between 1859 and 1872 when the property was sold by O. S. Poe, one of Pittsboro's most prominent merchants, to the Reverend Matthias Murray Marshall (1841-1912) the son of Abel and Delana Marshall.¹⁸

Matthias Marshall was born in Pittsboro and following his early education in the local schools, he spent three years (1858-61) at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut.¹⁹ When the Civil War started he returned home and joined the Confederate army. Ill health, however, forced his resignation and he entered the University of North Carolina where he developed his background in religious studies. In 1863 following his graduation, Marshall was ordained deacon at St. Bartholomew's Church in Pittsboro. The young clergyman then returned to the war as Chaplain of the Seventh North Carolina Regiment and later served as Hospital Chaplain at Kittrell. In 1865 Marshall became an ordained Episcopal minister and following his service in several North Carolina churches, including Emmanuel Church in Warrenton, he was presented with the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity by the College of William and Mary in 1874. That same year Dr. Marshall was appointed the fifth rector of Raleigh's prestigious Christ Church. Known as a conservative churchman, Dr. Marshall, nonetheless, was a strong advocate of free pews and it was under his guidance that such a policy was carried out at Christ Church. In 1906 following several intervals of illness, Marshall concluded his duties as rector and in 1912 he died and was buried at Raleigh's Oakwood Cemetery.

It would seem that Marshall's purchase of his boyhood home in Pittsboro was intended for the benefit of his mother and her family. Indeed the 1880 census indicated that Delana Marshall Brewer and her husband Green Brewer resided in the neighborhood.²⁰ By 1900 Green Brewer had died and his daughter Laura Hanks had married Joseph E. Morgan, the printer at the Chatham Record. The young couple and their children resided in the house and were probably responsible for building the projecting wing and late-nineteenth century porch. The census suggests that Delana Brewer, then seventy-eight, occupied a separate residence next door.²¹ In 1906 the title of the property was transferred from Dr. Marshall to his half sister Laura Morgan.²² Until her death in 1942 Laura Morgan resided in the house and following this date it became the home of her son Thomas D. Morgan, the cashier at the Bank of Pittsboro.²³ When Thomas Morgan died in 1973, his wife Mariam Chapin Morgan continued to reside in the dwelling until her death in 1979.²⁴ In 1980 the house was purchased by Jane Pyle who operates a small printing company out of her home.²⁵ Miss Pyle has undertaken a sympathetic restoration of the house.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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received
date entered

Continuation sheet Lewis Freeman House Item number 8 Page 3

1. Chatham County Deed Books, Office of the Register of Deeds, Chatham County Courthouse, Pittsboro, Deed Book AE: 134.
2. Doug Swaim, ed., Carolina Dwelling (Raleigh: The Student Publication of the School of Design: Volume 26, North Carolina State University, 1978), p. 30.
3. William Perry Johnson, 1815 Tax List of Chatham County, North Carolina (Raleigh: W. P. Johnson, 1975), p. 9.
4. Chatham County Deed Book AE: 134; Johnson, p. 9.
5. Wade Hampton Hadley, Doris Goerch Horton and Nell Craig Strowd, Chatham County 1771-1971 (Durham: Moore Publishing Co., 1976), p. 201.
6. Chatham County Deed Book AE: 134.
7. Fifth Census of the United States, 1830: Chatham County, Population Schedule.
8. Swaim, p. 30.
9. Ibid., p. 32.
10. Chatham County Deed Book AF: 296; Chatham County Will Books, Superior Court Clerk's Office, Chatham County Courthouse, Pittsboro, Will Book C: 181.
11. Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Chatham County, Population Schedule.
12. Chatham County Deed Book AE: 134.
13. It is unclear at this time why Freeman's son Waller did not actually take title to the property. One deed of 1837 (AE: 134) would seem to have transferred the title to Waller Freeman of Raleigh and a deed of 1843 (AF: 296) ostensibly transferred the title from Waller Freeman of Washington, D. C. to Bernard Nooe. These are the only references to Waller Freeman and Bernard Nooe in the Chatham County deeds. However Lewis Freeman's will of 1845 (C: 181) indicated that the property was to be left to Creesy Freeman his wife and upon her death to John Thompson. No mention was made in the will to the children.
14. Seventh Census of the United States, 1850.
15. Chatham County Deed Book AI: 429.
16. Chatham County Deed Book AN: 92.
17. Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900: Chatham County, Population Schedule; Baptismal Records of St. Bartholomew's Church, Pittsboro: courtesy of John H. London, Pittsboro.

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National Park Service

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date entered

Continuation sheet Lewis Freeman House Item number 8 Page 4

18. Chatham County Deed Book AP: 336.
19. The biographical information on the Reverend Matthias M. Marshall, D.D. was taken from the following source: Centennial Ceremonies Held in Christ Church Parish, Raleigh, North Carolina A. D. 1921 (Raleigh: Bynum Printing Company, 1922), pp. 34-37.
20. Tenth Census of the United States, 1880: Chatham County, Population Schedule.
21. Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900.
22. Chatham County Deed Book DV: 781.
23. Laura Morgan died intestate.
24. "William C. Morgan and William B. Chapin, Petitioners vs. Thomas Daniel Morgan et al, Respondants, File No. 79 Sp. 81", Special Proceeding of the Superior Court of Chatham County, Superior Court Clerk's Office, Chatham County Courthouse, Pittsboro.
25. Chatham County Deed Book 434: 350.

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL AND ECONOMIC RESOURCES
RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA

663

5155 1 SW
(BYNUM)

665

CHAPEL HILL 15 MI
BYNUM 2.5 MI

666

667

Pittsboro Multiple Resource
Nomination
Pittsboro, N.C. Quadrangle

Zone 17

Scale 1:24 000

London Cottage
17 663990/3954960

Kelvin
17 664240/3954340

Lewis Freeman House
17 664590/3954370

Reid House
17 664650/3954420

Moore-Manning House
17 664890/3954800

Hall-London House
17 664890/3954440

Patrick St. Lawrence House
17 664710/3953070

McClenahan House
17 664730/3954060

A. P. Terry House

- A 17 663980/3954000
- B 17 664150/3954000
- C 17 664310/3953740
- D 17 663950/3953720

Luther Clegg House
17 666140/3951860



