

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR

Chatham County

MULTIPLE RESOURCE OR THEMATIC NOMINATION

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Kelvin
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

503 West Salisbury Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Pittsboro

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

4th

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 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
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Elizabeth M. Bell

STREET & NUMBER

503 West Salisbury Street

CITY, TOWN

Pittsboro

VICINITY OF

North Carolina STATE

STATE

27312

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Chatham County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Pittsboro

STATE

North Carolina

6 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Ruth Selden-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

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR
 DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Set back in a generous yard, Kelvin faces east, across what were designated as town commons, towards the early town of Pittsboro. The house is surrounded by a wide variety of old trees and shrubs, evidence of the late-nineteenth century nursery of Claudius B. Denson.

Raised up on a stone and clay foundation, Kelvin is a two-story Federal style house with a gable roof, exterior end chimneys and a single-pile plan. A one-story three-bay addition also with a gable roof was built onto the north end of the house ca. 1838.

The five-bay main facade is lighted by nine-over-nine sash windows on the first floor and six-over-nine sash windows on the second. The windows are set into molded architraves which rest on a rounded sill. The entrance is marked by a narrow early twentieth-century Colonial Revival porch which features a five-centered arch supported on panelled posts. The entrance of the north addition uses a similar motif. The front doors and high brick terrace are products of a twentieth century restoration.

On both sides of the house, the attic is pierced by two four-light windows which flank the chimney neck. The chimneys which are laid up in common bond bear evidence of repair, and the chimney on the south, which is tightly joined, rests on a stone and clay foundation which incorporates a kitchen fireplace in the cellar. This south chimney displays paved shoulders and a corbelled cap. Partially enclosed by the one-story addition, the north chimney appears to have undergone more alteration and is capped with a series of corbels in higher relief. Three one-story shed roof additions resting on brick foundations extend along the rear of the house.

The simple but finely-proportioned Federal interiors at Kelvin portray the work of a talented regional craftsman. The broad central hall, like the rest of the interior, is skirted by a flush board sheathed wainscot and is overhung by a sheathed ceiling. The plaster wall above the wainscoting is finished with a slender molded chair rail and cornice. The enclosed quarter-turn staircase with winders which protrudes into the north parlor rises from the rear of the hall towards the front. Also typical of Pittsboro's Federal period are the six-panel doors which, in the hall at Kelvin, offer four flat panels surmounted by two raised panels.

The mantels at Kelvin are unquestionably the buildings most important features. Fitting comfortably into the piedmont's slow-moving architectural tradition, the designs of the mantels reflect the taste of the post-Revolutionary period and are comprised of molded architraves and panels. In the south parlor the fireplace is encased in a finely-proportioned three-part surround capped with a molded cornice, loosely adapted from the Ionic order. The mantel of the north parlor is similar but the addition of a three-panel frieze has increased the height of the composition. Flanking the north parlor mantel are two built-in bookcases which no doubt occupy the sites of early windows.

The woodwork of the addition is almost identical to that of the rest of the first floor. Built perhaps a decade later, the addition gave the craftsman an opportunity to update the style. Here a three-part frieze is flanked by pilasters. With an eye for surface contrast, the craftsman executed a plain central panel

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 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 checked="" 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 1831

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed by 1831 as a private girls school by wealthy landowner Colonel Edward Jones, Kelvin, with its enclosed staircase, sheathed wainscoting and well-proportioned mantels, is the finest example of the regional Federal style in Pittsboro. Kelvin is also the last of the town's esteemed private girls schools which were thought to have a sizeable influence on the field of contemporary women's education in North Carolina.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

- A. Kelvin is associated with Pittsboro's important development during the 1830s when a number of well-established men from the coast sought out the economic potential of this distant piedmont region. It was during this period that Mrs. Jones' girls school was drawn from the inconvenience of the country into the newly-expanding town where it became one of several women's institutions which were thought to have a sizeable influence on the field of contemporary women's education in North Carolina.
- B. The house is associated with the well-established landowner, lawyer, and politician Edward Jones who, after a considerable political career in Wilmington, which included his election by the legislature as the second Solicitor General, settled in Chatham County.
- C. With its enclosed staircase, sheathed wainscoting and well-proportioned mantels, Kelvin, built by 1831, is the finest example of the regional Federal style in Pittsboro.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Built as a private girls school by Colonel Edward Jones (1762-1841), one of Chatham County's most important post-Revolutionary landowners, Kelvin was constructed by 1831 and is the finest example of the regional Federal style in the town of Pittsboro. Born in Ireland and the brother of Irish patriot William Todd Jones, Edward Jones left his trade as an apprentice to a linen merchant and eventually established himself in Wilmington, N. C. as a merchant.¹ While unsuccessful in the mercantile trade, Jones showed an aptitude for law and following his study with the prominent North Carolina jurist Archibald Maclaine, he entered politics. In 1801 Jones moved to Chatham County where he built a home, called Rock Rest, eight miles west of Pittsboro. An experienced lawyer and legislator, Jones made an immediate impact on the area. As early as 1804 he was named to the board of trustees of the University of North Carolina and Jones was an early trustee of Pittsboro's all-male academy.²

Pittsborough Academy answered the needs of the boys in the community but Jones, the father of four daughters, must have seen the need for a school for girls. Sometime before 1828 his wife, Mary Mallett Jones (1773-1837) started a private boarding school for girls at their Rock Rest home. In 1831, however, the Raleigh Register announced a change:

The very remote situation of Rock Rest rendered it on many accounts, inconvenient for a school, while all the advantages of retirement, without any of its inconveniences are secured by the present commodious and pleasant situation, a few hundred yards from the town. Pittsborough, and its vicinity, are remarkable for health, being the resort of many families from the low country during the summer months.³

The "present commodious and pleasant situation" which the Jones' took the trouble to advertise in the Raleigh newspaper, undoubtedly referred to the newly built Federal house, Kelvin.

When Edward Jones' eldest daughter Charlotte married former Pittsboro town commissioner William H. Hardin in 1838, Kelvin and ten adjoining acres were included in the marriage agreement.⁴ The young couple took over the management of the school and it would seem likely that the one-story north wing was added at this time. By 1846 the Hardins had moved to Cumberland County and Kelvin was purchased by Dr. Spence McClenahan (1798-1859).⁵

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 Less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

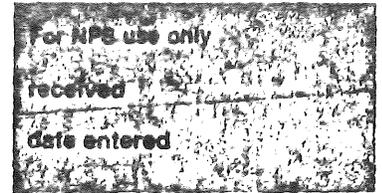
A	17	664240	3954340	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All of Lot 3 Block 4 Map 8 Pittsboro Township, Chatham County Tax Map.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet Kelvin

Item number 8

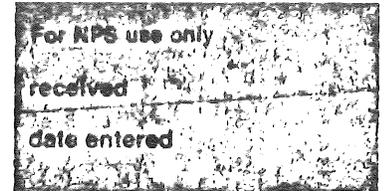
Page 2

Spence McClenahan, a prominent local physician, politician and businessman was an influential member of the town of Pittsboro from the community's first period of development in the 1830s through the economic excitement of the 1850s. In 1836 McClenahan was elected to the state's General Assembly and again in 1840 and 1848.⁶ In 1849 Dr. McClenahan accepted the presidency of the newly-founded Cape Fear and Deep River Navigation Company.⁷ Unsound investments in the navigation company and a local plank road company, however, contributed to McClenahan's poor financial state at his death in 1859. McClenahan's wife Sarah and their six children lived on at Kelvin through the Civil War, but in 1869 with little money left Mrs. McClenahan sold the house to Claudius B. Denson.⁸

Claudius Denson took over as headmaster at the Pittsboro Scientific Academy, as Pittsborough Academy was then called, and seems to have established a botanical nursery at "Kelvyn Gardens."⁹ Following a violent storm in 1875 the Raleigh Daily Sentinel reported that the "nursery of Capt. C. B. Denson was very much damaged."¹⁰ In 1880 Denson was even listed in the census as Secretary of Agriculture of the State of North Carolina.¹¹ C. B. Denson was married to Matilda Cowan and five of their seven children were born at Kelvin.¹² In 1886 the Pittsboro Scientific Academy closed down and Denson accepted a post at Raleigh's Male Academy.¹³ Kelvin was not sold at this time but seems to have been mortgaged over a period of years.¹⁴ The property was, however, utilized following Denson's departure. In 1886 Kelvin was the scene of a grand dinner celebrating the opening of the railroad.¹⁵ The festivities drew brass bands from Raleigh, Durham and Siler City and 2500 people enjoyed the feast. After Denson's death in 1903 Kelvin seems to have been held under the stewardship of William L. London. The family of W. L. London sold the property to Alice Bell Ferebee in 1926.¹⁶ Four years later Kelvin was sold to Allie Peoples Bell and her husband Judge Daniel L. Bell.¹⁷ The present occupant of the house is Elizabeth M. Bell, Judge Bell's daughter.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet Kelvin

Item number 8

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1. Lawrence F. London, "Edward Jones," an unpublished biography: courtesy of the author. Unless otherwise noted the information on Jones comes from this source.
2. Wade H. Hadley, Doris G. Horton and Nell C. Strowd, Chatham County 1771-1971 (Durham: Moore Pub. Co., 1976), p. 266.
3. Hadley, Chatham County, p. 268.
4. Chatham County Deed Books, Office of the Register of Deeds, Chatham County Courthouse, Pittsboro, Deed Book A-E: 93.
5. Chatham County Deed Book A-G: 457.
6. Hadley, Chatham County, p. 437.
7. Wade H. Hadley, Jr., The Story of the Cape Fear and Deep River Navigation Company 1849-1873 (Siler City: The Chatham County Historical Society, 1980), p. 10.
8. Chatham County Deed Book A-N: 350.
9. Hadley, Chatham County, p. 176; Branson's North Carolina Business Directory, 1872, 1884 (Raleigh: Levi Branson), pp. 58, 206.
10. Raleigh Daily Sentinel, March 24, 1875, p. 1 c. 1
11. Tenth census of the United States, 1880: Chatham County, Population Schedule.
12. Harry Z. Tucker, "St. Bartholomew's" The State, February 1939, p. 15.
13. A. H. London, Jr., "Historical Background of Chatham County," typescript (Chapel Hill: Department of Rural Social Economics, 1923), p. 28.
14. Chatham County Deed Book BH: 168; Chatham County Will Books, Superior Court Clerk's Office, Chatham County Courthouse, Pittsboro, Will Book F: 393.
15. Hadley, Chatham County, p. 206.
16. Chatham County Deed Book GK: 515.
17. Chatham County Deed Book HE: 10.

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 10'

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

