

PART OF FILE MISSING

9

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
Patrick St. Lawrence House

AND/OR COMMON
Yellow House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN
Pittsboro

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
Mrs. Emily T. Brower

STREET & NUMBER
203 South Street

CITY, TOWN
Pittsboro

VICINITY OF

North Carolina STATE
27312

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Chatham County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
Pittsboro,

STATE
North Carolina 27312

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

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

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

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The Patrick St. Lawrence House is located at 203 South Street, Pittsboro,
N. C. This address is not to be published.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Facing west at the end of a quiet cul-de-sac within the original town plan, the Patrick St. Lawrence House is a five-bay two-story frame residence with a low gable roof. Displaying some diminution of the fenestration, the tall late-eighteenth century facade is sheathed with beaded clapboards which as early as 1798 were painted yellow. The tradition for painting the house yellow continued into the nineteenth century and can be confirmed in deed descriptions. Resting on a new brick foundation, the house was once flanked by two exterior end chimneys which have left their mark in the repaired weatherboards.

Although the present entrance porch with its deck-on-hip roof and lattice-work posts is a reconstruction from an early picture of the house, the location of a door, which hangs lower than the second story windows, above the entrance seems to confirm the authenticity of the porch design. The entrance below is comprised of two five-panel doors with the original lock box, well-worn threshold and three-part molded architrave. The nine-over-nine sash windows are set into robust three-part molded architraves with molded sills. The roof is finished with a simple box cornice and tapered rake boards.

Adapted to fill the needs of an early inn, the plan of the St. Lawrence House is unusual. By means of a hinged, panelled partition which can be hooked to the ballroom ceiling, the central-hall plan, with a ballroom on one side and two parlors on the other, can be thrown open. The ballroom, thereby, incorporates the handsome staircase of the entrance hall. The elegant closed stringer staircase was built with a half turn, and landings against the rear of the hall. Tradition holds that the newel posts and balusters are imported woodwork. Indeed, there is a marked contrast between the ornate staircase and the setting into which it is installed. The massive hexagonal newel posts with their two-part molded caps are linked by a heavy handrail supported by robustly-turned balusters. There are no ramps or ease-offs. In contrast to the ornate stair, the response of the balustrade along the wall is sheathed as is the panelling below the stringer. The use of a sheathed wainscot is entirely in keeping with the tradition of contemporary piedmont architecture and recurs in Pittsboro well into the 1830s.

The contrast of the two styles is nowhere more apparent than at the foot of the staircase where the simple molded rail of the sheathed response abuts the heavily molded chair rail and baseboard of the first floor. The chair rail, which is bilaterally symmetric, is composed of a bead followed by a cyma recta and a cyma reversa. Unlike the usual eighteenth century design, the chair rail does not continue to form the window sill. The chair rail is finished off before each window and the window is supported on a molded sill similar to that used on the exterior. The mantel from the ballroom was sold a number of years ago and a vernacular Federal mantel from the Hanks-Horne House, now demolished, occupies its place. The doors throughout the house are of a six-panel design with the bevelled panel towards the hall and flat panel towards the chamber. They are set into three-part molded frames and fitted out with H and L hinges.

The two parlors and the chambers above originally contained corner fireplaces which have left their mark in the diagonally laid floor boards. The front parlor has been adapted for use as a kitchen and a modern bathroom has been added to the second floor. In addition a one-story enclosed porch has been built on the south end of the house and a one-story porch with a shed roof to the rear.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> ART | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input checked="" 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 ca. 1787 as an inn, the Patrick St. Lawrence House is the oldest building in the town of Pittsboro and, with its robustly-carved closed-stringer staircase and expanding ballroom it is an outstanding rural example of the Georgian/Federal style.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

- A. Originally built to overlook the courthouse square, the Patrick St. Lawrence House is closely associated with the founding of the town of Pittsboro in 1787 and served as the community's earliest inn and gathering place.
- B. The house was built by Patrick St. Lawrence who, in his positions as early town commissioner, trustee of Pittsborough Academy, Mason and innkeeper, provides valuable insights into the town's early years.
- C. Built as an inn, the Patrick St. Lawrence House is the town's oldest building and is the sole example of Pittsboro's former Georgian/Federal tradition. The house contains an unusual method for enlarging the first floor parlor. By means of a moveable-partition wall the hall and parlor can be joined to create a ballroom.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

On November 1, 1786 Patrick St. Lawrence purchased six Pittsboro town lots containing 8 3/4 acres "agreeable to a plan of the Town laid out on the Lands purchased of William Petty by the Trustees appointed by the Hon. General Assembly to lay out a Town on the Land of Mial Scurlock deceased." St. Lawrence probably came to Chatham County shortly before his purchase of the town land. Although St. Lawrence was not connected with the two earlier attempts to found a town, by 1786 he ranked among the area's early leaders and was appointed one of the original town commissioners.² The third attempt to found the town of Pittsboro proved successful and was confirmed by a legislative act on January 6, 1787.

Included among the lots which St. Lawrence purchased was town lot no. 50 which faced south across the public square where the new courthouse was erected. It was here on lot no. 50 that St. Lawrence erected an inn and home for his new bride, Elizabeth McCarroll. Mrs. McCarroll was the widow of Dr. James McCarroll who owned a tract of about 500 acres west of Pittsboro and who ran an ordinary. Described by his wife as "Remarkable for his knowledge in the arts and science," McCarroll must have set a high standard which St. Lawrence felt compelled to equal.³ In his effort to excell, St. Lawrence, it is said, built a house so grand that both he and the contractor went into bankruptcy.⁴ While the true scale of St. Lawrence's wealth can be questioned, the man was undoubtedly well-to-do. An inventory of his possessions included a billiard table, two dozen chairs, a clock, a buffet, a desk and bookcase, eight tables, twelve pictures, a settee and four beds. This picture also included three Negro slaves, a mare and cart and seven head of cattle.⁵

Besides his considerable land holdings and his work helping to establish the town, St. Lawrence was a trustee of the Pittsborough Academy and an early member of the town's Masonic order.⁶ By 1798, however, Patrick St. Lawrence was in debt to his wife's son Thomas McCarroll and to Robert Donaldson (1764-1808).⁷ It is not known how long St. Lawrence continued to live in the house before he went to Mississippi but on August 13, 1798 his property went up for public sale, and Donaldson purchased lot no. 50 for 720 pounds.⁸ The garden lot no. 31 behind the house was sold for 62 pounds. Robert Donaldson was a merchant from Fayetteville who in 1795 married Sarah Henderson the daughter of John Henderson, a Pittsboro business associate and one of the county's largest landowners.⁹ Donaldson's first son and namesake rose to prominence as a New York banker and patron

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 Approx. 3.5 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	17	6647.10	3915.3970	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All of Lot 1 Block 6 Map 10 Pittsboro Township, Chatham County Tax Map.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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of the arts. It was probably through family or business connections that the elder Donaldson acquired the property but he continued to reside in Fayetteville. Seven years after his purchase of the St. Lawrence House, Donaldson sold it to Joseph Harmon.¹⁰

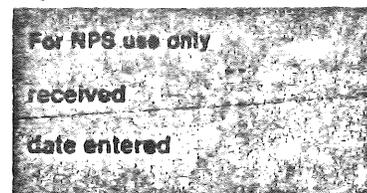
Joseph Harmon occupied the St. Lawrence House and continued to run the place as an inn and tavern. In 1806 the inn was the scene of a three day main, or series of cockfights, which drew attention from as far away as Raleigh.¹¹ In 1815 Harmon, who was by this time in business with William Poe, sold the inn to one of the town's most prosperous investors, Winship Stedman.¹² Stedman's acquisitions of town property began in 1789 and continued until his death in 1828. Among his other holdings was the house of Elisha Stedman, reportedly the town's first residence. It would appear that Stedman purchased the inn in 1815 as a business venture. He, like Harmon was licensed to sell spirituous liquor and his inventory reveals that he resided on another town lot.¹³

It would appear that shortly after Stedman's death in 1828 the family took up the practice of renting out the Patrick St. Lawrence House. The "Chatham Reminiscences" of lawyer Joseph John Jackson reveal that in 1833 the St. Lawrence House was the residence of Capt. Peter Le Messeurier. Le Messeurier came to Pittsboro in 1831 to take over the principle post at the Pittsborough Academy. The academy drew students from a wide radius and Jackson recalled his move from his home in Orange County to Pittsboro where he attended the school and boarded, as did others, with Le Messeurier. In 1834 Le Messeurier left Pittsboro and continued his teaching career at the Raleigh Academy.¹⁴

Following Le Messeurier's occupancy, Stedman's wife sold the house to her daughter Nancy W. Poe in 1836.¹⁵ Sometime before the Civil War the house was purchased by Elizabeth Ramsey Goldston who operated it as an inn through the war years. In 1863 Sheriff Richard Bray Paschal noted with horror that his one-night stay cost seven dollars.¹⁶ Following the war "the house known as the Yellow House" was transferred from Elizabeth Goldston to Edward B. Ramsey, her son by her previous marriage.¹⁷ Under the same transaction Ramsey sold the house to Aaron G. Headen, Luther Bynum and Mark Bynum trading as the mercantile firm of Headen, Bynum and Company. Aaron G. Headen, the mercantile firm's founder, resided in the St. Lawrence House until his death in 1907. Following Headen's death the St. Lawrence House was inhabited by Headen's wife until it was moved to lot no. 91 on the east side of South Street below the courthouse.¹⁸ It was here that Mr. H. G. Beard and Mr. and Mrs. Sam Beard lived.¹⁹ In 1955 the Chatham County Commissioners purchased the property in preparation for a new agricultural building.²⁰ The present owner Mrs. Emily T. Brower bought the house and had it once again moved to lot no. 125 at the end of South Street.²¹

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1. Chatham County Deed Books, Office of the Register of Deeds, Chatham County Courthouse, Pittsboro Deed Book D: 277.
2. Wade H. Hadley, Doris G. Horton and Nell C. Strowd, Chatham County 1771-1971 (Durham's Moore Publishing Co., 1976), p. 202.
3. Wade H. Hadley, A General Store at St. Lawrence Post Office in Western Chatham County, N. C. 1851-1852 and Notes on the History of the Community (Siler City, N. C.; privately printed, 1974), pp. 3 & 4.
4. North Carolina: A Guide to the Old North State (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1939), p. 363.
5. Patrick St. Lawrence Inventory, March 15, 1798, Chatham County Estate Records, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, N. C.
6. Hadley, Chatham County, p. 263.
7. Patrick St. Lawrence Inventory.
8. Hadley, Chatham County, p. 416; Chatham County Deed Book K: 78.
9. John V. Allcott, "Robert Donaldson, the First North Carolinian to Become Prominent in the Arts," North Carolina Historical Review, Vol. LII no 4 (October 1975), p. 336.
10. Chatham County Deed Book O: 49.
11. Raleigh Register, July 14, 1806: Courtesy of Doris G. Horton.
12. Chatham County Deed Book U: 57.
13. Chatham County Deed Book K: 84; Winship Stedman Inventory, Chatham County Estate Records, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, N. C.; Chatham County Will Books, Surrogates Office, Chatham County Courthouse, Pittsboro, Will Book B: 147-149; "Chatham Reminiscences," Chatham Record, April 1, 1897; William Perry Johnson, 1815 Tax List of Chatham County, North Carolina (Raleigh: W. P. Johnson, 1975), p. 5.
14. "Chatham Reminiscences" Chatham Record, April 1, 1897; Hadley, Chatham County, pp. 264-265.
15. Chatham County Deed Book A-D: 473.
16. Diaries of Richard B. Paschal 1860, 1861, 1863 and 1864, September 19, 1863, Bray Family, Local History Vertical File, Pittsboro Public Library, Pittsboro, N. C.

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17. Chatham County Deed Book C-R: 394.
18. Chatham County Will Book F: 465; G: 223; Chatham County Deed Book GZ: 533; Lucy London Anderson, "Old Pittsborough People and Homes," The News and Observer (Raleigh), August 6, 1933.
19. William B. Morgan, Greensboro Daily News, June 26, 1949; Chatham County Deed Book HE: 449.
20. Chatham County Deed Book LW: 552
21. News and Observer (Raleigh), May 28, 1957; Chatham County Deed Book TJ: 514.

