

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: North Carolina	
COUNTY: Edgecombe	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Coolmore Plantation

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Route 3 (US Highway 64 west of Tarboro)

CITY OR TOWN:
Tarboro

STATE North Carolina	CODE 37	COUNTY: Edgecombe	CODE 065
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure 	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
J. C. Powell

STREET AND NUMBER:
Route 3

CITY OR TOWN:
Tarboro

STATE: North Carolina	CODE 37
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Edgecombe County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
301 St. Andrews Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Tarboro

STATE North Carolina	CODE 37
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1940 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:
East Capitol and Independence Avenue, S.W.

CITY OR TOWN:
Washington

STATE: D.C.	CODE 11
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: North Carolina
COUNTY: Edgecombe
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SECTION

(Check One)

Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Ruins Unexposed

CONDITION

(Check One)

Altered Unaltered

(Check One)

Moved Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Coolmore Plantation, a two-story frame mansion with small one-story wings, was begun in 1859. It was designed in the Italian Villa style by E. G. Lind of Baltimore. The main block has a hip roof intersected by decorative gables. The wide overhang is supported by very elaborate brackets. At the apex of the roof is a fanciful belvedere with stained glass windows. The north (front) facade is three bays wide, the center bay being slightly recessed. This bay features a one-story flat roofed porch with chamfered posts terminated by cornice caps. Above the porch is an elongated, stylized Palladian window. The flanking bays are divided at the second floor level by a simple heavy wooden stringer. On each level there are coupled pairs of windows. Those on the second floor have simple round arched heads. Those on the first are floor length, have segmental arched heads, and are sheltered by cornices supported on moulded brackets.

On the interior, Coolmore presents a series of unusual, elaborate rooms. The entrance hall is apsidal and treated with a profusion of wooden and plaster ornament including pilasters on pedestals supporting elaborate brackets and a false half dome. Behind this is the stair hall featuring a superb elliptical stair which ascends to and is lighted by the belvedere. At the rear is a small rectangular hall.

In the northwest corner is the parlor which retains its original furnishings, marble mantel, wallpaper, and superb painted ceiling in trompe l'oeil with flowers, panels, and other designs. Across the hall is a second parlor with walls painted to resemble polychromed panels, an elaborate painted ceiling, marble mantel, and most of its original furnishings. In the southwest corner is the dining room which has painted walls like those of the second parlor and features cupboards with glazed doors of red patterned glass on either side of the fireplace. The stair hall is painted to resemble polychromed panels like the second parlor.

On the grounds are original servants quarters, gas house, smoke house, carriage house, and other dependencies all treated with cupolas. Some have bracket cornices in imitation of the main house.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In 1845 Dr. Joseph J. W. Powell, a prominent Edgecombe County physician, acquired the Robert D. Wimberly plantation approximately four miles northwest of Tarboro. He lived in a small farmhouse until 1859 when he began construction of a mansion designed by E. G. Lind of Baltimore. The house was completed shortly before Dr. Powell's death in 1861 and the property was divided by the court, with his widow, Martha B. Powell, receiving one-third of the 1,165-acre estate including their new home "Coolmore." After Mrs. Powell's death the plantation passed to her son Joseph C. Powell. Joseph was a noted agriculturalist and an active member of the Edgecombe County Farmers' Alliance, serving as its secretary in 1889. His son, Joseph C. Powell, Jr., is now resident owner.

Coolmore is set in a grove of large magnolias and deciduous trees on a twelve-acre lawn. Since its construction the house remains almost unaltered with its outbuildings complete. Preserved in the house are many of the bills and invoices connected with the construction of the house as well as the architect's original drawing. Coolmore is one of the largest, finest, and best documented examples of a plantation house of its style and period in North Carolina.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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

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

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Located near Tarboro in Edgecombe County is Coolmore Plantation. Its Italianate mansion house, built just before the Civil War and designed by the prominent architect E. G. Lind, is one of the finest examples of its kind in the region. Historically it reflects the nature and success of the large plantation cotton economy which dominated the coastal plain in antebellum North Carolina.

The house was constructed by its first owner Dr. Joseph J. W. Powell. Prior to coming to Edgecombe County, Powell was a prominent Halifax County physician and planter. His Halifax holdings included a large number of acres and 25 slaves in 1850. He had married Martha B. Whitaker in Halifax County in 1844.¹ During the 1850s he came to the Tarboro area at the request of his uncle Richard Harrison (1768-1856), a wealthy land-owner who served in the state senate for seven years in the early nineteenth century and owned considerable stock in the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad and the Bank of North Carolina.² While living with his uncle, Powell evidently ran both the Edgecombe and Halifax plantations. When Harrison died in 1856 he left the Edgecombe property to his nephew. Before his uncle's death Powell resided in the house of a former overseer, but in the year following Harrison's death he began work on the present-day mansion.³

During the construction of the house Powell continued to run a large and successful cotton plantation. As the owner of 106 slaves at Coolmore alone, he ranked among the top echelon of planters in terms of wealth in the South. The 1860 census shows that he had 900 acres under cultivation and produced a cash crop in that year worth \$65,000. On hand he had 260 bales of ginned cotton weighing 400 pounds each. His slaves also produced 4,500 bushels of corn, 600 bushels of peas and beans, and slaughtered animals worth \$1,900. He had \$2,500 invested in farming implements and \$7,000 in livestock.⁴

There is also evidence that he practiced the new techniques of scientific agriculture and soil refurbishment as set forth by the famous Virginia agricultural revolutionist and political secessionist, Edwin Ruffin. In fact Ruffin came to Edgecombe County around 1858-1859 and may have visited Coolmore. In any event the systematic use of marl, which Ruffin discovered as an improvement to the soil, was practiced at Coolmore. In his will Richard Harrison refers to Powell using the lime fertilizer to improve Coolmore lands.⁵

The Coolmore mansion was completed in 1860 and its ornate construction displayed the elegance that the wealth of the South's most prosperous planters were able to secure for their homes. Baltimore architect E. G. Lind designed the house. Having planned or renovated a number of residential and commercial buildings in Tarboro, he had already gained a favorable reputation for his ability. Another of his Italianate works was the house of one of the town's leading merchants, W. L. Dozier. Of particular note at Coolmore is the trompe l'oeil and ceiling paintings done by a fresco artist named Dryer whom Lind brought to the area. When completed Coolmore House stood as a proper monument to wealth and influence in Edgecombe County.⁶

Dr. Powell's stay in the new mansion, however, was short-lived, for he died in the spring of 1861--only a few months after the dwelling was completed. Although he had a will (now on file in the state archives), the county court judged him to have died intestate. In the subsequent settlement, Coolmore and 1,165 acres (a third of the estate's total acreage) went to his widow Martha B. Powell.⁷ At her death in the 1890s the property passed to her son Joseph C. Powell who continued to farm the tract, eventually converting

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the plantation to primarily a stock and dairy farm. Like his antebellum predecessors, he attempted to employ the latest technological innovations to obtain the best yield from the farm. In 1894 he acquired a newly-developed separator for his dairy operation. The arrival of the device aroused the interest of the county's farmers and prompted a visit to Coolmore by some leading citizens and the editor of the Tarboro Southerner. "By special invitation of Mr. J. C. Powell," reported the newspaper,

the editor of the Southerner in company with Mr. George Howard, Jr., and Mr. Job Cobb, rode out to Coolmore Farm last week, to witness the working of a new separator, late purchased by Mr. Powell for his stock farm.

Mr. Powell has his separator nicely fixed up in the basement of one of his outhouses. This separator is run by a small oil engine, that is in itself a beauty. The inventor of this machine was present and operated it. In exactly seventeen minutes after the milk was poured into the reservoir, the cream had been taken from seventy-one pounds of milk. This separator has a capacity of nearly twelve thousand revolutions per minute. The working of this machine is splendid, and is now considered probably the best on the market, as it is guaranteed to get all the cream from the milk.

Mr. Powell is nicely fixed up for the dairy business. Mr. Barrigon [the inventor?] remarked to the crowd standing by, that he had never seen a dairy farm where everything was kept nicer and cleaner.

Mr. Howard, Mr. Cobb and the editor express their thanks to Mr. Powell for courtesies especially the elegant breakfast that was served.

Powell's success at farming led to his becoming a leader in the local Farmer's Alliance; he served as secretary of the organization in 1889.⁸ Since his death in 1909, Coolmore has remained in the family and is presently operated as a large cattle farm. The mansion house and outbuildings are relatively unaltered and have recently been designated a National Historic Landmark.

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FOOTNOTES

¹Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, Halifax County, Population Schedule, 15; Slave Schedule, 187; Halifax County Marriage Bonds, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

²William T. Moyer, "Stonewall," an unpublished historical research report, at Research Branch, Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina, 10-11.

³Interview of McKelden Smith, III, architectural historian, with Mr. Joseph C. Powell, July 20, 1978, hereinafter cited as Powell interview.

⁴Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Edgecombe County, North Carolina, Agricultural Schedule, 329; Slave Schedule, 282-283.

⁵Joseph Blount Cheshire, Nonnulla (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 19-22.

⁶Powell interview; Catherine Bishir and Joe Mobley, "Tarboro Historic District," an unpublished National Register nomination, Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina, 13, 16.

⁷Edgecombe County Estates Records, Joseph J. W. Powell, 1861, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina, hereinafter cited as Edgecombe County Estates.

⁸Edgecombe County Estates, Martha B. Powell, 1894; The Southerner (Tarboro), August 16, 1894; J. Kelly Turner and Jonathan L. Bridgers, History of Edgecombe County (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, 1920), 291.

⁹Powell interview; Edgecombe County Wills, Joseph C. Powell, 1909, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Edgecombe County Records, Edgecombe County Courthouse, Tarboro, North Carolina, Office of the Register of Deeds. (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills, Estate Papers, Census Reports.)

Edgecombe County Records, State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina. (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills, Estate Papers, Census Reports.)

Turner, J. Kelly and Jonathan L. Bridgers. History of Edgecombe County, North Carolina. Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Printing Company, 1920.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	35	° 55	' 31	"	77	° 35	' 44	"	
NE	35	° 55	' 31	"	77	° 35	' 36	"	
SE	35	° 55	' 21	"	77	° 35	' 36	"	
SW	35	° 55	' 21	"	77	° 35	' 44	"	

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Approx. 13 acres.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:

J. G. Zehmer, Asst. Admin., Research & Restoration; John B. Wells, Survey Specialist

ORGANIZATION

State Department of Archives and History

DATE

10/5/70

STREET AND NUMBER:

109 East Jones Street

CITY OR TOWN:

Raleigh

STATE

North Carolina

CODE

37

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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 National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name

Dr. H. G. Jones

Title Director, State Department of Archives and History

Date

October 5, 1970

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Bishir, Catherine and Mobley, Joe. "Tarboro Historic District," and unpublished National Register nomination. Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.
- Cheshire, Joseph Blount. Nonnulla. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1930.
- Edgecombe County Records. Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina. Subgroups: Estates, Wills.
- Halifax County Records. Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina. Subgroup: Marriage Bonds.
- Interview of McKelden Smith, III, architectural historian, with Joseph C. Powell, Jr., July 20, 1978.
- Moye, William T. "Stonewall," an unpublished research report. Research Branch, Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.
- Turner, J. Kelly and Bridgers, Jonathan L. History of Edgecombe County. Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, 1920.
- United States Bureau of the Census. Seventh and Eighth censuses of the United States, 1850 and 1860. Edgecombe and Halifax counties, North Carolina. Population, Agricultural, and Slave schedules.

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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
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COUNTY	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

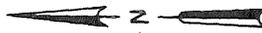
(Number all entries)

9.

Waterman, Thomas T. and Francis Benjamin Johnston. Early Architecture of North Carolina. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947.



Coolmore Plantation
 Route 3 (US Highway 64 west of Tarboro)
 Tarboro



Highway Map of Edgecombe County
 North Carolina State Highway Commission
 Scale: 2" / 4 miles
 January 1, 1968

	Latitude			Longitude		
	degrees	minutes	seconds	degrees	minutes	seconds
NW	35°	55'	31"	77°	35'	44"
NE	35°	55'	31"	77°	35'	36"
SE	35°	55'	21"	77°	35'	36"
SW	35°	55'	21"	77°	35'	44"

