

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Cooke House

AND/OR COMMON

Same

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Southeast side S.R. 1114, northeast of S.R. 1109

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Louisburg

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

2nd

STATE

North Carolina

 VICINITY OF

CODE

37

COUNTY

Franklin

CODE

069

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

 DISTRICT BUILDING(S) STRUCTURE SITE OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

 PUBLIC PRIVATE BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

 IN PROCESS BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

 OCCUPIED UNOCCUPIED WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

 YES: RESTRICTED YES: UNRESTRICTED NO

## PRESENT USE

 AGRICULTURE COMMERCIAL EDUCATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT GOVERNMENT INDUSTRIAL MILITARY MUSEUM PARK PRIVATE RESIDENCE RELIGIOUS SCIENTIFIC TRANSPORTATION OTHER**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mrs. Mary Harrison Cooke Best

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Route 2

CITY, TOWN

Franklinton

STATE

North Carolina

VICINITY OF

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Franklin County Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Louisburg

STATE

North Carolina

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 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 type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Cooke House, which faces northwest, is composed of two sections: a large, two-story front block three bays wide and two deep, with exterior end chimneys of brick in irregular bond with single, stepped shoulders; and a smaller earlier one-story section, with stone chimneys with single, smooth shoulders. The front section has a gable roof. The roofline of the rear section has been altered, evidently when the front part was added; it probably was a gable roof. The house is in somewhat deteriorated condition, and the exterior finish is consistently plain. There is a molded box cornice front and rear, and a tapered rake board on the gable ends. Window and door frames are plain; sash on the front section is nine-over-nine at the first level and six-over-nine at the second, and side windows have six-over-six, four-over-four, and two-over-two, in ascending order. The central entrance consists of a double door, flanked by sidelights and framed by symmetrically molded elements with plain cornerblocks.

The rear facade of the rear section has six-over-six sash. A wide hip-roof porch now extends across the main facade of the front section, replacing a hip-roof entrance porch with square Doric posts shown in a late nineteenth century photograph. This section stands on a high brick basement with large horizontal vents; the rear section stands on a low stone foundation.

The interior of the house, too, is relatively intact but rather plain and somewhat deteriorated. The rear section now has a center-hall plan. Walls have flush-sheathed wainscots with simple chair rails. Doors have six raised panels. The mantel in the east room is quite simple with two flat panels above a rectangular fire opening. Door and window frames are molded and mitered. An enclosed stair rises from the inner rear corner of the west room, and at the second level there is a heavy, plain balustrade with a large, floor-to-ceiling chamfered post. A beaded chair rail articulates the plastered walls at this level, and there is a simple mantel with molded architrave, plain frieze and shelf.

The front section follows a center-hall plan one room deep, and the finish is early Greek Revival in character. The stair in the central hall rises in two flights with a transverse landing. A simple post and slender balusters carry a straight, rounded hand-rail. Door and window frames are molded. Mantels are transitional Federal-Greek Revival in character. The most notable mantel, a vigorous tripartite one with Empire overtones, is located in the north parlor. Freestanding turned colonnettes flank a symmetrically molded architrave plain cornerblocks and carry a heavy frieze. The large end blocks and center tablet are plain, and the intermediate areas of the frieze undulate in high relief. There is a heavy shelf.

Other mantels in this section are similar but lack the elaboration of the frieze.

# 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 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 type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Cooke House, composed of a small early rear section and a larger Greek Revival front portion, was the homeplace of a family who contributed much to Franklin County history, serving in the War of 1812 and the Civil War, in state Baptist affairs, and in local and state political circles. Jones Cooke, a veteran of the War of 1812 and a local political figure, married Jane Kingsbury, a "Yankee schoolteacher"; among their children were Walter, a physician in Louisburg, and Charles Mather, who served in the state senate and house, as secretary of state, and as Superior Court judge.

Thomas Cook, according to historian Samuel Ashe, was born in 1700 and came to Bute County (the part now Franklin) from Virginia, before the American Revolution. His will of 1798 divided his property among his nine children and wife Amy; to his son, Jones Cook, he left slaves "together with the land and plantation whereon I now live." Jones Cook (1786-1872) served as captain in the War of 1812, commanding a company of Franklin County troops; he was also chairman of the county court and prominent in the affairs of the Baptist State Convention. Through inheritance from his father, from his maternal grandfather Richard Conyers, and presumably through purchase, he amassed 1,800 acres of land, as indicated by county tax records. Jones Cook married three times. His first wife, Elizabeth Jeffreys Green, was the widow of Dr. Fernifold Green; they were married in 1808. Only one child, Eleanor, survived. After the death of Elizabeth, Jones Cook married another widow, Sarah Cotten in 1829; one of their sons, Preston, went blind at an early age, and remained at home throughout his life.

After the deaths of two wives, Jones Cook had a number of children to raise. Sometime between 1838 and 1840, Jane Kingsbury, the daughter of Darius and Esther Mather Kingsbury of New Hartford, Connecticut, came to Franklin County as schoolteacher; an album belonging to her is said to have a New Hartford entry dated August 1838, and a Franklin County one dated December 2, 1840. It is said that she lived in the Cooke household and may have tutored his children. The story is told that "someone came to the house one evening looking for the Captain and was told that he was courting. To this the inquirer asked, 'Where? Upstairs?'" The couple was married in August, 1841; it is said that the front portion of the house was built about the time of their marriage.

The Census of 1860 shows the household as containing Jones Cook, aged 74, farmer, born in North Carolina, with real estate evaluated at \$7,202 and a personal worth of \$37,308. He owned 42 slaves. His wife Jane A., aged 42, is listed as being born in New York. Preston, aged 28, is noted as being blind. Other children--all Jane's--included Josephine, 17, Charles M., 16, Isabel, 14, Walter j., 11, and Dora F., 7; all but Preston and Dora are listed as having attended school within the last year.

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Education--and accomplishments following later--seems to have been an element important to the Cooke family, and it is likely that the "Yankee schoolteacher," said to be a descendant of Increase and Cotton Mather, had a strong influence in this direction. Walter J. Cooke (1840-1889) was a well-known physician, who practiced locally.

Charles M. Cooke attended Wake Forest College in 1860 and 1861, at ages 16 and 17, and withdrew in order to enlist in North Carolina troops at the beginning of the Civil War. He served in Company I, 55th Regiment, and became the unit's adjutant and historian; he was wounded at Petersburg March 31, 1865. He was later to write the unit's history for Clark's Regimental history. After the war, Cooke married Bettie Person in 1868 and was licensed to practice law--in county court January, 1867, and superior court, 1868. He played a prominent role in the Baptist church, serving as a trustee of the Baptist school, Wake Forest College, from 1871 to 1920, and as president of the Baptist State Convention in 1876. In an era when Reconstruction Republicans and blacks were pitted against white Democrats, Cooke took an active role in Democratic political activities. He was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1872 and in 1874 was elected to the North Carolina Senate. He was appointed solicitor in the Sixth Judicial District in 1877, by Governor Zebulon Vance, and served in the North Carolina House of Representatives in 1879, 1881, and 1889; he served as speaker of the house in 1881. Other positions Charles M. Cooke held included the board of directors of the state prison (1884-1888), secretary of state in 1895-1896 (following his unsuccessful campaign for a seat in Congress), and superior court judge (4th district) 1903-1916. During most of his career, Cooke continued in his "large and lucrative" law practice and was known as a persuasive advocate. During his life and after, Cooke was quite celebrated in Franklin County; his importance in the Democratic party in the turbulent post-Civil War years was a source of pride to much of the county's population. A local historian assessed Cooke's role thus:

Possibly the outstanding figure in the political life of Franklin for 30 years beginning with the 80's of the last century was Charles Mather Cooke, Confederate soldier, lawyer, member of the House, member of the Senate, Solicitor, Secretary of State, Judge of Superior Court, prominent layman in the Baptist Church. This is not saying that he surpassed or outshone his cotemporaries /sic/ here either in his great ability, legal or otherwise, or in the weight of his character--it is saying that in popular appeal, his grip on the people, their thought and<sup>1</sup> affections, he stood at the top and for quite a while he stood there alone.

Cooke lived in a large house in Louisburg during much of his productive life, but it was torn down in 1974; his homeplace is the only site known to be associated with him.

Cooke had a number of children who made notable contributions in the state and elsewhere, including his son Fred who organized the medical department at Wake Forest; Francis, a career army officer; Percival, a lawyer; and others.

<sup>1</sup>Davis, Edward Hill, Historical Sketches of Franklin County, p. 178: Edwards and Broughton, Raleigh, North Carolina, 1948.

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The 1880 census showed Jane Cooke still living at the homeplace, together with stepson Preston, three unmarried daughters, and Walter, the doctor; only Walter later married. Jane Kingsbury Cooke lived until 1881, and left the homeplace to her three daughters, with the provision that her blind stepson, Preston, would live there as well and be provided for. The balance of her property was to be divided among her two sons, Charles and Walter. The home property descended to Dr. Walter J. Cooke's son, Walter, Jr. (1886-1969), and then to his daughter, Mary Cooke Harrison Best, who owns it now. The place has been occupied by tenants for several decades.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Ashe, Samuel A., ed. Biographical History of North Carolina from Colonial Times to the Present. Greensboro, North Carolina: Charles L. Van Noppen, 1907.

Burt, Mary Harrison Cooke. Unpublished research on Cooke family history, copy in Survey files.

Cyclopedia of Eminent Representative Men of the Carolinas of the Nineteenth Century. . . Volume II. Madison, Wisconsin: Brant & Fuller, 1892, reprinted 1973.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 5 acres

L&L:  $36^{\circ} 03' 19''$   $78^{\circ} 20' 23''$

UTM REFERENCES

A 

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 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

D 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Research and architectural description by Catherine W. Cockshutt, survey supervisor

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Division of Archives and History

31 July 1975

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

109 East Jones Street

919/829-7862

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Raleigh

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 National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

*Ronnie Ann Douglas*

TITLE Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 31 July 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Davis, Edward Hill. Historical Sketches of Franklin County: Edwards & Broughton, Raleigh, North Carolina, 1948.

Franklin County Records, Franklin County Courthouse, Louisburg, North Carolina  
(Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).

Franklin County Records, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina  
(Subgroups: Deeds, Wills, Estate Papers, Census Records).



