

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Davis Family House

other names/site number Davis-Forbes House

2. Location

street & number North side of SR 1355 (Panther Creek Road), 0.8 mile northwest of Ferguson Bridge over the Pigeon River N/A not for publication

city or town Crabtree vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Haywood code 087 zip code 28721

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jeffrey J. Crows SHPO 11/20/96
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	2	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	2	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

-0-

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Work in progress

Vacant/not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: two-room plan

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Fieldstone

walls Weatherboard

roof Metal

other Stone

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheet.

Davis Family House
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Haywood County, North Carolina
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

Ca. 1880

Significant Dates

Ca. 1880

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Arrington, Robert F.--carpenter
Rathbone, Dexter Rabun--carpenter

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Davis Family House
Name of Property

Haywood County, North Carolina
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approx. 3 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 17 3 2 1 2 5 0 3 9 4 3 6 9 0
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Davyd Ford Hood

organization _____ date 1 August 1996

street & number Isinglass, 6907 Old Shelby Road telephone 704/462-4331

city or town Vale state N.C. zip code 28168

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Ms. W. Ann Forbes

street & number Post Office Box 8511 telephone 704/765-2239

city or town Asheville state N.C. zip code 28814

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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The Davis family house, a small, modestly-finished one-story-with-loft weatherboarded frame house, stands in a simply-leveled clearing at the foot of a hillside rising to the north from the bank of the Pigeon River. The house, reached by way of a gravel drive off the north side of Panther Creek Road, stands in view of the road which follows a path generally parallel with the river. The house is built with its front elevation facing west rather than south whereby its porch would overlook the road and the northwesterly flow of the river; nevertheless, and because of its proximity to the river, the north bank of which is the south boundary of the nominated property, the ever-present sound of the gently rushing water can be easily heard from the porch and through the windows on the south side of the house. The house faces west and addresses, at some distance, a 1949-1950 frame barn which stands on the west side of the gravel drive and a parallel spring-fed branch which flows along the west side of the drive and into the river. Enclosed on the north, east, and west by volunteer woodlands that form the remaining boundaries of the nominated property, the house site has few developed features. A low stone retaining wall carries on the south side of the house and defines the simple terrace on which the house stands. There is a large boxwood standing to the north side of the house near the chimney. William Carlyle Davis, the last family owner, planted the tall hemlock and maple trees which shade the north edge of the house's front lawn. (In the spring of 1996 the grass and weed covered clearing has been slightly enlarged and disturbed for the installation of a septic tank and drainage.)

In part because of its proximate relationship to the Pigeon River, the ca. 1880 house has a picturesque presence in the riverside landscape: the other contributing factors are its diminutive scale and the engaging profile of the gable-end roof which extends as a shed to cover the 1925-1926 addition. The original ca. 1880 house consists of the one-story-with-loft block and the hip-roof porch on its front, west elevation. In 1925-1926 Joseph Yoder Davis added the shed across the full rear elevation for use as a kitchen and dining room. The house sits on a mortared stone foundation completed in 1950 and built of stone gathered on the place. There is a door opening, flanked by window openings, centered in the foundation below the main block: the door is lost; however, the four-pane casement windows remain in place. The finish of the house is plain except for the original Italianate-style door and window surrounds which remain in place on the main block. The elevations of the house are sheathed with simple weatherboards. The house's gable ends are enlivened with raking boards at the top of the elevations and exposed rafter ends below flush-sheathed simply-molded projecting eaves. The roof is covered with 5-V sheet metal which was added in the 1940s (and subsequently replaced in kind) after the house's original board roof began to fail.

The west, front elevation of the house is dominated by a one-story hip-roof porch which shelters most of the elevation. The porch has a wood floor, square-in-plan supports, and a ceiling of molded tongue-and-groove sheathing. The roof of the porch rises to a point just below the edge of the house's main roof. (There was a small loft-level window, asymmetrically placed above the porch roof, which was closed up in the 1940s.) The wall behind the porch originally had a symmetrical three-bay arrangement with a center door flanked by single four-over-four sash windows. In 1925-1926, when the windows on the rear, east elevation of the main block were rendered obsolete by the addition, one was installed

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beside the window to the left (north) of the front door to provide extra natural daylight into the living room. The door opening is enframed with the same Italianate-style surround as the windows: it is fitted with a ca. 1949 wood door featuring two tall glazed panes above three horizontal panels and a wood and wire mesh screen door.

The north gable end of the main block has a symmetrically-positioned mortared stone chimney: there is a small window opening, to the east of its stack which illuminates the north loft chamber. There is a somewhat larger rectangular window opening in the center of the north shed end which holds a six-pane casement illuminating the kitchen. The south gable end of the house, its most visible elevation, has single centered window openings on the first floor and loft levels of the main block and a pair of four-over-four sash windows in the shed addition. The rear elevation of the house is occupied by the shed: there is a single doorway, holding a ca. 1925 five horizontal panel door, and a six-over-six sash window positioned in the north half of the elevation. The door and window were sheltered after 1949-1950 by a simple shed porch added by William Carlyle Davis. Its removal is the only visible indication, on the exterior of the house, of the restoration and renovation which has just begun.

The interior of the main block follows a two-room plan with an enclosed stair rising on the south side of the partition wall defining the living room on the north and the downstairs bedroom in the south half of the first story. The finish of the ca. 1880 original house is virtually intact except for the loss of the living room's post-and-lintel mantel to theft, the addition of a ca. 1949 overlay narrow pine floor in the living room, and the ca. 1949 replacement of the doors leading from the living room to the bedroom and the shed addition with typical two-panel doors of the period. Otherwise, the flush-sheathed walls and ceiling of both rooms remain intact and the bedroom retains its original floor: most of the door and window surrounds also remain intact. In the living room the fireplace is fitted with a cement hearth, added ca. 1949, and a brick firebox with an arched top. Ghost marks in the cream paint on the walls indicate the original position and profile of the mantel and its shelf. There is a cement flue opening positioned in the north wall directly above the firebox. There are also ghost marks above the front and original rear door which indicate a two-panel overdoor treatment that appears to have been created by applied moldings. These doorways, refitted with new doors in the 1949 refurbishment, have plain board surrounds whereas the windows and the doorway communicating with the bedroom have original symmetrically molded surrounds. The entrance to the enclosed stairwell is positioned at the extreme west edge of the living room's south wall. It is fitted with a four-panel door and there is one step positioned outside the stairwell on the living room floor. The original window opening in the center of the room's east wall has been infilled with flush boards. The finish of the downstairs bedroom is entirely original: it includes its pine floor, flush sheathed walls and ceiling, and symmetrically molded door and window surrounds. The enclosed stair, visible in the northwest corner of the room, includes a closet under its rise that is fitted with a board-and-batten door with a wood latch.

The loft level of the ca. 1880 Davis family house is a remarkably intact space featuring pine flooring, a simple board baseboard, and flush-sheathed walls and a lowish ceiling. The original window in the south gable end retains its original molded surround. As noted there

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was a small window in the loft's west wall which has been closed and sheathed over. In the 1949 refurbishment, undertaken to accommodate the family of William Carlyle Davis, a simple board partition wall was installed along the north edge of the stairwell to form two rooms: the stair well is protected by a simple member railing.

The shed added across the rear of the house was built as one large room and sheathed with tongue-and-groove ceiling; a partition was then added near the center of the space to separate the kitchen on the north from the dining room on the south.

Barn
1949-1950
Noncontributing building

This frame barn was built in 1949-1950 by William Carlyle Davis when he returned to the farm with his wife and family, following his father's death. It was built as a replacement for the farm's log barn which was then pulled down. It stands due west of the house and on the west side of the house drive. The rectangular building is covered with spaced horizontal board sheathing and a sheet metal gambrel roof. It has a vertical board shed on the east side elevation. The barn is built on a center-passage plan with an opening on the north end and a like opening in the center of the south end which is protected by double-leaf board-and-batten doors.

Smokehouse
1949-1950
Noncontributing building

Rectangular in plan, this frame building stands on stone piers and is covered with vertical board siding and a sheet-metal gable front roof. It has a door opening on the south elevation and additional openings on the west and north elevations. The storage building was built by William Carlyle Davis and stands uphill and off the immediate northeast corner of the house.

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The Davis Family House, a small one-story-with-loft dwelling with Italianate-style trim, commands a picturesque appearance in its hillside clearing above the Pigeon River in upper Haywood County. Home to three generations of the Davis family, the house satisfies Criterion C for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and possesses local significance in the area of architecture as an intact example of a rapidly-disappearing building type. Erected about 1880 and expanded by a shed-room addition in 1925-1926, the house represents a once common, but now quite rare house type which was widely inhabited by rural middling families in Haywood County and surrounding mountain counties in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. Small two-room plan frame houses such as the Davis House were built on the same plan as log dwellings which were very common in the earlier decades of the nineteenth century. In many cases, the two-room frame version replaced earlier log ones as transportation improvements in the mountains made access to milled lumber and manufactured architectural elements such as windows more accessible. From the time of its completion until 1955, the Davis Family House was the primary component of a traditional, simple, rural mountain subsistence farmstead which until 1926 included a detached log kitchen that is said to have been the original dwelling on the property.

The Davis Family House was erected about 1880 for Joseph S. Davis (1855-1913) and his wife Laura Rhea (1861-1937) on land which was said to have descended in the Rhea family from Solomon Rhea (1811-1894) and his wife Mary Ann "Polly" Ferguson (ca. 1813-1893). The house was home to the couple's nine children and became the property of their son, the Reverend Joseph Yoder Davis (1895-1949) who resided here until his death. Thereafter, it was the home of the builder's grandson William Carlyle Davis and his family until 1955 when they removed to nearby Waynesville. It remained in family ownership until 1967 when it was sold to the present owner who is undertaking the restoration of the house. Since a 1980 survey of Haywood County revealed that many of the county's small number of late-nineteenth-century modest, frame, one-story-with-loft dwellings were rapidly being lost to abandonment and outright destruction, most have disappeared. The survival of the ca. 1880 Davis Family House in a largely intact state is an unusual phenomenon that will be reinforced when its restoration is completed.

Historical Background

The Davis Family House, said to have been built for Joseph S. Davis about 1880 and occupied by his descendants until 1955, is associated with the lives of members of the Davis and Rhea families who settled in the valleys along the Pigeon River in the (? later-eighteenth and) early nineteenth centuries. The land on which the house is built, originally believed to be a part of the lands acquired by Solomon Rhea, came into the possession of the Davis family through the marriage of Laura Rhea (1861-1937) and Joseph S. Davis (1855-1913) in the later 1870s. Solomon Rhea (1811-1894), the progenitor of the Rhea (Ray, Wray) family in Haywood County is believed to be of Irish or Scotch-Irish ancestry. According to family tradition he first settled in the Bald Creek section of Yancey County and later came to Haywood County. He and his wife Mary Ann "Polly" Ferguson Rhea (ca. 1813-1893), the daughter of Robin Ferguson, are buried in the cemetery at Panther Creek Baptist Church: it is located about two-and-one-half miles west of the house. According to family tradition Laura Rhea is the granddaughter of Solomon Rhea and the daughter of John Rhea (18__-1864). John Rhea lived in a log house that stood on the north bank of the Pigeon River, about a mile west of this

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house: it was pulled down in the early 1930s and the site is now occupied by a later house occupied by Joe Edgar Ray.¹

In the later 1870s, and probably in 1877 or 1878, Laura Rhea was married to Joseph S. Davis, a son of Madison Davis who lived on Rush Fork Creek: Madison Davis is said to be buried at Panther Creek Church; however, his grave is not marked. Etta Davis, the first known of the couple's nine children was born in 1879. As was a custom, the young couple might have lived with either the Rhea or Davis family during the first year(s) of their married life. According to family tradition, a one-story-with-loft log building was the original dwelling house on this place; however, it is unclear whether it was built for Joseph S. and Laura Davis or predated their occupation of it. They are believed to have occupied it for a period until about 1880 when they determined to build this more stylish weatherboarded frame house. The original block of the new house contained two rooms on the first story and a large flush-sheathed loft above. The kitchen for the newly-built weatherboarded frame house was the log building, said to have been built of poplar logs, which stood in a freestanding perpendicular position to the northwest of the house. Its front elevation faced south to the Pigeon River and featured a porch where cooking chores and food preparation could be undertaken during the warm months. That porch carrying on an east/west axis was perpendicular to, but did not abut, the west front porch which carries across the facade of the family's frame house.

Between 1882 and 1898, eight children were born to the couple, and most if not all of them were born in the house. Erastus Davis was born in 1882 and two years later, in 1884, a son Madison was born and named for his grandfather Madison Davis. A third son Hardy Davis was born in 1886: the fourth son, Vinson Davis, was born in 1888. The fifth son and sixth child, Von Davis (1890-1902), died at the age of twelve and was buried in the cemetery at Panther Creek Baptist Church. The couple's seventh child, Joseph Yoder Davis, was born on 23 April 1895 and he would live his entire life in the house on the hillside above the Pigeon River. On 4 April 1898, nineteen days before Joseph Davis's forty-third birthday, twins were born to Joseph and Laura Davis: Dewey Ray Davis and Laura Day Davis. As events proved, the two youngest sons, Joseph Yoder and Dewey Ray Davis (1898-1981), continued to live here on family lands along the Pigeon River. The other siblings established farms elsewhere in the county or removed to more distant places. Joseph S. Davis died on 3 August 1913 and was interred in the cemetery at Panther Creek Baptist Church. His widow Laura continued to live on here until her death on 3 May 1937.

Relatively little is known of the specific farming practices of Joseph S. Davis except for his planting of a large orchard of apple trees on the hillside above the house; the many varieties included York, Buff, Green Pippin, Red June, Yellow Flat, Summer Queen, and Belle Flower apples as well as Hay Sweet apples which were fed to the swine. These apples, as well as fall peaches, were consumed in the summer and autumn and also were dried for winter and spring use, providing fruit for the family during the year long. Davis also grew crops including corn and wheat, and raised vegetables for family use. This self-sufficient manner of farming and gardening followed the traditions of the region in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries

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and it would be continued here by Joseph Yoder Davis from the 1910s until his death in 1949. Today there are virtually no traces here of the orchard or the fields and gardens which nourished the family for nearly eight decades.

At some point after the death of Joseph S. Davis in 1913, and perhaps with the encouragement of his mother, Joseph Yoder Davis made the decision that he would make his home here on the family farm. In 1918 he was married to Bertha Moore (1895-1979), the daughter of Thomas and Alice Moore of Madison County. He brought his bride to the house and the couple made their home here until his death in 1949. On 14 October 1922, a son, William Carlyle Davis, was born to the couple: a second son, Joseph Calvin Davis, was born on 27 February 1926. Both children were born in the south, downstairs bedroom. Meanwhile, through a deed of 4 December 1924, Joseph Yoder Davis bought out the interests of his siblings in the farm (Haywood County Deeds, 68: 56). The following year, he decided to replace the old freestanding log kitchen with a new kitchen and dining room in a shed addition across the east rear elevation of the frame house. This change reflected both his newly-gained title to the farm as well as an increasing prosperity. Robert F. Arrington (1870-1957) was the principal carpenter/builder for the addition, and he was assisted by Dexter Rabun Rathbone (1875-1958): both men are buried at Panther Creek Baptist Church. According to family tradition this work was completed in 1925-1926: the old log kitchen was subsequently torn down.

Through the course of his life, Joseph Yoder Davis was a farmer while he also served as a minister for a group of rural Baptist churches: among them were White Oak, Panther Creek, Cove Creek, Crabtree, and Ironduff churches in Haywood County, and Ebenezer Church in Buncombe County. The inscription on his gravestone in the Panther Creek Baptist Church cemetery identifies him as "A faithful minister of the gospel for more than thirty years." Davis continued to use the large log barn built here by his father and about 1928 he added a frame corn crib built of chestnut wood felled on the farm. About 1930 he constructed a log tobacco barn with tiered poles for curing the tobacco leaves. Joseph Yoder Davis maintained and supplemented the plantings in the orchard established by his father, kept fenced pastures for cattle, farmed the fields along the Pigeon River and stretching up the hillside, and raised vegetables in a fenced enclosure to the east of the house.

Just as the deaths of Joseph S. Davis in 1913 and his widow Laura Rhea Davis in 1937 marked changes in the family life, the death of the Reverend Joseph Yoder Davis, on 12 January 1949, prompted other changes in the character of life on the family homeplace. On 26 November 1945, William Carlyle Davis was discharged from the United States Army and on 9 February 1946 he was married to Billie Louise Bryson, a native of the Ironduff section of Haywood County: the couple occupied a nearby rental house on Panther Creek Road and worked at the American Enka plant in Waynesville. Meanwhile, Joseph Calvin Davis, the younger brother, had been discharged from the army in 1946, married Mazie Lou Green that same year, and built a small frame house in 1947 well up the south face of the hill above and to the north of the homeplace: he and his wife lived there until about 1952 and the house was rented

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afterward for a period. In February 1949, William Carlyle Davis and his wife returned to the homeplace to make their home with his widowed mother. Within the space of a year or two they made two important improvements to the house. In 1949 the house was wired for electricity and connected with the existing line which had been run along the Panther Creek Road. During 1950, Davis completed the stone perimeter foundation to the house which had stood on wood piers. A sheet tin roof had been put on the house, earlier in the 1940s, to replace the old board roof. While William Carlyle Davis continued the agricultural practices of his father, he pulled down the old log barn and the log tobacco barn in 1949-1950 and erected the present frame barn with the assistance of Lewis A. Kirkpatrick (b. 1924). He also built a frame corn crib on the site of the old log barn. Davis had a mixed herd of short-horn Durham, Hertford, Guernsey, and Holstein cattle and sold some grade C milk. The swine were penned while the chickens were free-range.

A life consisting of public work at the American Enka plant and farm work in the hours afterward and through the weekend was both strenuous and rewarding for William Carlyle Davis. In 1951 he left the employ of the American Enka Company and turned to farming. In 1952 he began part-time work with the Soil Conservation Service. In 1954 he became a full-time employee of the Soil Conservation Service and was enrolled at the University of Georgia at Athens in the agricultural extension curriculum. Davis completed his course of study and returned to Haywood County in 1954 and continued his full-time work with the Soil Conservation Service; he retired from the agency on 31 October 1982. Within the space of a few years it became obvious to Davis that he could not carry on full-time work with the Soil Conservation Service while living on the family homeplace and farming its acreage: the decision was made to move to Waynesville. In 1955 he built a brick-veneer house at 209 Simms Circle in suburban Waynesville: in October 1955 he, his mother, his wife, and their daughter Terrell Lynn Davis (b. 1949) moved out of the homeplace on the hillside above the Pigeon River to the new house. Ten years later, in 1965, he built a second house at 207 Simms Circle on the knoll above #209, where he and the family moved and he and Mrs. Davis continue to live. During the years from 1955 until 1967 the family house and farm were rented.

In 1961 a plat of the home farm was made by Ray E. Anders and the farm acreage was divided between the two brothers. The east tract of 72.60 acres including the ca. 1880 house was assigned to William Carlyle Davis: the west tract including the 1950 frame barn and some 51.40 acres was assigned to Joseph Calvin Davis. This division was not formally registered. In April 1967, the farm was re-platted by Ray E. Anders on behalf of Dr. Norman Alan Thorne. On 3 May 1967 the farm, described as comprising 121.50 acres, was conveyed by Bertha Moore Davis, her sons, and their wives, as heirs in common of Joseph Yoder Davis, to Norman Alan Thorne and his wife Wilhelmina Ann Forbes Thorne of Buncombe County, North Carolina (Haywood County Deeds 218. 178). The Thornes were divorced in 1977: the Davis family house and its land are now the property of Wilhelmina Ann Forbes. Ms. Forbes is in the process of restoring the house.

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Haywood County, North CarolinaArchitectural Significance

The Davis Family House, a modest one-story-with-loft weatherboarded frame house erected about 1880, is important in the architectural history of Haywood County as a largely intact example of deeply-rooted traditional domestic architecture. It is an example of a rapidly-disappearing house type that was once common among the rural middling families in Haywood and surrounding mountain counties in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. The conservative farmers of the mountain counties built small two-room plan frame houses on the same plan as the log dwellings they replaced as transportation improvements made access to milled lumber and manufactured architectural elements such as windows more accessible. The traditional, two-room frame Davis House with its modestly stylish Italianate trim is said to have replaced a single pen with a loft log dwelling that was thriftily-employed as a free-standing kitchen for the new house. In 1925-1926, an indoor kitchen and dining room was installed in a shed addition on the rear elevation of the 1880 house, and the nineteenth century log building was pulled down.

Like other counties in the western reach of North Carolina, Haywood County was settled largely in the later eighteenth century and the opening years of the nineteenth century. Formed from Buncombe County in 1808 and named for the then sitting State Treasurer John Haywood (1755-1827), the county is largely mountainous and lies in the Appalachian Mountain Range. The county's northwest border carries along the state's border with Tennessee. For most of the first century of settlement and occupation, from about 1775 until 1875, most of the inhabitants of the county lived in cabins or houses of log construction.

Beginning in the 1870s, some few of the county's wealthiest citizens erected houses of brick or frame construction. One such example is the seat of the Patton Farm (National Register, 1980), a two-story brick house which was probably erected in the 1870s or 1880s by James McConnell Patton (1817-1890) on the plantation he inherited from his father James Patton (1780-1854). The affluence of the Patton family was exceptional in the county for that period and the same might also be said of James McFadden Gwyn (1850-1913), a well-educated farmer who built a large double-pile two-story house with Italianate detailing (National Register, 1984) about 1888: it overlooks the East Fork of the Pigeon River in the southeast part of the county and stood as the seat of a 1,750-acre plantation which Gwyn acquired in 1874.

A review of the buildings recorded in the architectural survey of Haywood County in the early 1980s confirms the fact that the Patton and Gwyn houses are probably the most imposing houses standing in rural Haywood County from the nineteenth century. They were exceptional in their day and they remain exceptional to the present: and, they are the only two houses situated in rural Haywood County that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. A small but significant group of log houses, covering the span of the nineteenth century (and the

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Haywood County, North Carolina

opening years of the twentieth century) was recorded in the county-wide survey. Representing the earliest house forms known to have been built in the county, many of those log dwellings, mostly one-story with a loft in height, have been significantly altered, overbuilt, or, even in the 1980s, stood in derelict state. The Will Penland Log House, a one-room-with-loft log cabin, is typical of the earliest such cabins built in the county. Standing in the Iron Duff community, it is a gable roof house with a principal stone chimney. Another example of the county's nineteenth century log-house form is the Alex Carpenter House in Maggie Valley that dates to the approximate period of the Davis Family House. It, too, is a one-story-with-loft log house with a stone gable-end chimney: the interior is built on a two-room plan seen here in the Davis Family House. Both of these houses stand in derelict, unoccupied condition.

Ironically, the same terms can largely be applied to the even smaller groups of houses, which form a link between those log houses and the two-story weatherboarded frame houses of the later nineteenth century. There are two houses in this group which survive largely intact and represent this transition. The Davis Family House, built on the same two-room plan and one-story-with-loft form of the Alex Carpenter House, is closer in appearance and spirit to those earlier log houses than the McCracken-Palmer House whose brick chimney and large flanking windows on both stories anticipates those features on the full two-story houses which followed in the 1880s, 1890s, and 1900s. When built about 1880, the Davis House featured two rooms on the main level and a flush-sheathed open loft above: that plan remains intact to the present. Many of these house types were greatly expanded or overbuilt or soon abandoned for larger houses at the turn of the century. When the Haywood County survey was conducted in the early 1980s the Davis Family House was renter-occupied: many, if not most of its contemporaries were vacant or abandoned. Thus the survival of the house to the present and its proposed restoration, provide an important but fast-disappearing transition between the earliest house forms in the county and those of the turn of the century.

Endnote

1. The principal sources used in the preparation of this nomination are the notes of two interviews with William Carlyle Davis. The first interview/conversation took place on 11 March 1994 between Wilhelmina Ann Forbes, John Horton, and William Carlyle Davis. A typescript copy of the interview was made available to the author. On 2 January 1996, this author conducted an interview with Mr. Davis; the notes of that conversation remain in the possession of the author. The use of Haywood County deeds is noted in the text of the nomination.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet**

Davis Family House
Haywood County, North Carolina

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Section 9. Bibliography

Books 68 and 218, pp. 56 and 178 (microfilm), Haywood County Deeds, State Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.

Betsy Farlow, Dan Lane, and Duane Oliver, *Haywood Homes and History* (Hazelwood, N.C.: Oliver Scriptorium, 1993), 28-31.

Survey Files, State Historic Preservation Office, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.

Wilhelmina Ann Forbes, John Horton, and William Carlyle Davis, interview on March 11, 1994. Transcript made available to author.

William Carlyle Davis, interview with author, January 2, 1996.

Section 10: Geographic Information

Verbal Boundary Description: The boundary of the nominated property, delineated on the enclosed 200-foot scale survey prepared on 18 April 1967, includes both legal property lines and a tree line as follows: the south boundary follows the south property line along the north bank of the Pigeon River; the east and west boundaries follow the property lines from the river bank northward to pins, shown on the map; the north boundary follows a topographical line on the interior, woodland side of the tree line which enframes the setting of the house.

Boundary Justification: The above boundary encloses a tract of approximately eight acres that provide an appropriate setting for the Davis Family House and preserves its physical and historical relationship to the Pigeon River.

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Davis Family House
Haywood County, North Carolina

Additional Documentation

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Schedule of Photographs

The following information applies to all of the photographs included in this nomination.

Name of Property: Davis Family House
North side of SR 1355 (Panther Creek Road), 0.8 mile northwest of
Ferguson Bridge over Pigeon River
Crabtree vicinity
Haywood County
North Carolina

Photographer: Davyd Foard Hood

Date of Photographs: 7 June 1996

Location of Original Negatives: North Carolina Division of Archives and History
109 East Jones Street
Raleigh, North Carolina 27601-2807

1. Davis Family House: Overall view, looking north/northeast.
2. Davis Family House: Front elevation, looking east.
3. Davis Family House: Window surrounds on facade, looking east.
4. Davis Family House: North elevation, looking southwest.
5. Davis Family House: Living room, looking southwest.
6. Davis Family House: Loft interior, looking northwest.

435 11 NE 17A NE
COVE CREEK GAP 17A NE

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Davis Family House, Crabtree Vic.
Haywood County
Zone 17,
Easting 321250
Northing 3943690

UNITED STATES
TENNESSEE VALLEY
MAPPING SERVICE

HOT SPRINGS 29 MI. 4455 III NW
COVE 3.6 MI. FINES CREEK 18

83°00' 319000m. E. 320 321 322 57'30" 323
35°37'30"

3943000m. N.
3942
3941

20 MI. TO TENNESSEE STATE LINE
NORTH CAROLINA 284



