

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: North Carolina
COUNTY: Rockingham
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
High Rock Farm

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
West side of S.R. 2619, 0.3 mi. north of junction with S.R. 2624

CITY OR TOWN:  
Williamsburg vicinity

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
Sixth  
The Hon. L. Richardson Preyer

STATE:  
North Carolina

CODE:  
37

COUNTY:  
Rockingham

CODE:  
157

**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 type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
Mrs. S. R. Prince

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Route 1, Box 146

CITY OR TOWN:  
Reidsville

STATE:  
North Carolina

CODE:  
37

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
Rockingham County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
Wentworth

STATE:  
North Carolina

CODE:  
37

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:  
 Federal  
 State  
 County  
 Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

CODE:

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

Excellent  Good  Fair  Deteriorated  Ruins  Unexposed

(Check One)

Altered  Unaltered

(Check One)

Moved  Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

High Rock, a large Federal house of brick laid in one-to-four common bond, rises two stories over a full basement. It is constructed on an "L" plan and is covered by a hip roof. It is an oversized three bays wide and two bays deep with two more bays added by the ell. A large brick exterior end chimney, deeply engaged, pierces the roof on either side of the house and at the rear of the ell. Both the rear of the ell and the south side of the house are blind facades. The front (east) facade is treated with a pedimented portico supported by two colossal, unacademic, stuccoed columns with simple neckings. There is a gallery at the second level. Each tier is embellished with a row of dentils, as is the pediment, which has an elliptical oculus in the tympanum. The porch railing consists of a simple molded handrail supported on square balusters. A curving double stair (not original) ascends to the porch.

The windows on the front facade follow a modified Palladian design, each surmounted by a wide stuccoed arch with a large keystone and splayed ends. The windows exhibit diminution with twelve-over-twelve sash on the first floor and twelve-over-eight on the second; tracery fills the fanlights. The sidelights correspondingly change from six lights to five lights. The windows have simple molded architraves and stone sills.

The entrances on both the first and second floors have the same Palladian motif with stuccoed arches. They exhibit diminution containing six and five-light-sidelights with shallow fanlights, and are set into raised-panel reveals and reeded soffits. The double doors have three raised panels on each leaf.

On the other elevations, fenestration consists of nine-over-six sash on the first floor and six-over-six on the second, with molded architraves and stuccoed flat arches with keystones and stone sills. Basement windows contain six-over-six sash and have simple molded architraves, as does the basement entrance.

At the east bay of the north side is a one-story gable roof entrance porch with a deeply molded cornice that returns into the flush-sheathed gable. It is supported by extraordinarily heavy columns similar in style to those on the front.

The rear (west) facade of the house has a recently added, one-story cast-iron porch, supported at the basement level with square wooden posts. Two Palladian windows occur at the rear.

The interior follows a central hall plan, one room deep with an open well stair. The finish is Federal, with retardataire forms in secondary rooms. All first-floor windows and interior doorways are framed by flat-paneled reveals and soffits, and the doors consist of six flat panels. The hall wainscot is flat-paneled, and doors have wide molded architraves. The south room is the most elaborate and has a wainscot like the hall, with a marbleized baseboard. The door is flanked by fluted pilasters which support a three-part entablature with sunbursts on the end blocks and center panel. The mantel has flanking, flat-paneled pilasters which support a three-part

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entablature identical to the overdoor. The Palladian windows have a scallop shell motif above the sidelights. The north room has the same wainscot and a similar three-part mantel, except that it lacks the sunbursts, and has fluted pilasters. The ell room has a three-part, flat-paneled mantel similar to the others.

The open-string stair is accented with wave brackets and ascends to the second floor in two runs with a transverse landing. It features a ramped, rounded handrail carried on square balusters. The newel and intermediate posts are characterized by an unusual swelling entasis and a simple necking. The wainscot carries up the stair and is similarly ramped on the first run, but thereafter does not follow the same line as the balustrade.

The two doorways off the second floor hall have paneled reveals and soffits as in the first floor. The south bedroom has an unadorned three-part mantel similar to those below, as well as a molded chair rail and baseboard. Closets have been added at the northern wall. The two north bedrooms share a common chimney and have corner fireplaces with simple mantels of transitional Georgian-Federal configuration. Each has a wide, molded architrave around the opening, topped with two truncated pilasters supporting a thin, molded shelf. The front bedroom has a flat-paneled wainscot, and the flat panel on the mantel is marbelized. The rear bedroom has a molded chair rail and baseboard.

The bedroom in the ell has its own set of enclosed stairs with winders leading down to the room below. It also has a mantel similar to the corner mantels, but wider, and the same baseboard and chair rail as the rear bedroom.

Leading to the basement is an enclosed stair from the center hall. It is floored in brick, with the basement hall floored completely with headers or half-bricks. All doorways and windows have paneled reveals and soffits, and the mantel in the south room is similar to those used in the north rooms on the second floor, with the wide architrave, short pilasters, and thin molded shelf. The north room lacks a mantel and the ell room has a cooking fireplace with a wide, arched opening and heavy, simple shelf. All rooms in the basement have a molded chair rail.

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian;       16th Century       18th Century       20th Century  
 15th Century       17th Century       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 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

The large brick house on High Rock Farm built early in the nineteenth century by Joseph McCain, a prosperous merchant, is the most impressive Federal period house in Rockingham County. The monumental three-story block with massive columns supporting the full portico is strikingly articulated by the fanlighted entrances and Palladian windows with heavy stuccoed keystone arches. The interior, like the exterior, contains fine Federal finish of a quality unusual in the area.

In 1805 Joseph McCain began acquiring land on the Haw River near High Rock Ford, the river crossing near the high rock landmark, a solid rock outcrop on the north bank some forty feet high. The ford served a heavily travelled wagon route. By this time High Rock Mill had been constructed near the outcropping and a granite dam built above the ford. In 1807 McCain married Polly Scales, daughter of Nathaniel Scales, a wealthy planter. The 1815 Rockingham County tax list indicates that McCain owned 600 acres of land valued at \$6,000, another 317 acres valued at \$1,115, eleven slaves, and a store. The \$6,000 evaluation probably includes the house. An inventory of McCain's estate following his unexpected death in 1830 reveals that he operated a general store from at least 1811 until his death. McCain died without a will, leaving a large stock of store goods on hand.

In 1831 Polly began petitioning the county court to allow her to sell the plantation. In the Raleigh Register and North Carolina Gazette of March 8, 1836, an advertisement to sell High Rock appeared. The plantation, a valuable tract of land belonging to the estate of the late Joseph McCain, was described as:

HIGH ROCK

Containing One Thousand Acres . . . on Haw River, on the main Stage Road leading from Washington City, through Salem, Salisbury, & c. and at the Cross Roads from Wentworth to Hillsborough. It has long been occupied and known as a Public Stand, both as a Store and House of Entertainment, and is perhaps as favorably situated as any place in this section of country. The improvements are, a large new three story BRICK HOUSE, containing ten Rooms, besides Passages, & c. an ICE HOUSE, with necessary Out-houses, a STORE HOUSE and TAN YARD which, at moderate expense, can be made fit for use; Apple and Peach Orchards, the former of choice late fruit.

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The plantation was sold in 1836 and had several owners before 1848, when it was purchased by Francis Simpson, whose descendants retained possession until 1900. The plantation house was built as a private residence, but due to its proximity to the ford it often functioned as an inn when the river was impassable. In 1857 a letter from the famous "Fool Killer," a fictitious character invented by C. N. B. Evans, the clever editor of the Milton Chronicle, was postmarked "High Rock, N.C." By the mid-nineteenth century High Rock had become a community with a post office, although today it is once again an isolated residence. In 1939 the deteriorated house was bought and renovated by Mr. and Mrs. S. R. Prince. The house, still in good condition, is now owned by Mrs. Prince.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Research by Ruth Little Stokes, survey specialist; architectural description by Neil Pearson, consultant.  
 Raleigh Register and N. C. Gazette, March 8, 1836. On microfilm in the Division of Archives and Records.  
 Rockingham County Records, Rockingham County Courthouse, Wentworth, North Carolina, Office of the Register of Deeds (Subgroups: Deeds, Maps, Marriage Bonds, Tax Lists, Court of Equity Minutes).  
 Rockingham County Records, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, Maps, Marriage Bonds, Tax Lists, Court of Equity Minutes).

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			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	0 ' "	0 ' "	36°	15'	36"
NE	0 ' "	0 ' "	79°	34'	00"
SE	0 ' "	0 ' "			
SW	0 ' "	0 ' "			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 9 acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Survey and Planning Unit

ORGANIZATION: Division of Archives and History DATE: 17 October 1973

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 H. G. Jones

Title Director, Division of Archives and History

Date 17 October 1973

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

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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Stokes, Durward T., ed. "Five Letters from Jesse Holmes, the Fool Killer to the Editor of the Milton Chronicle." The North Carolina Historical Review, Vol. L, No. 3, Summer, 1973.

