

(Oct. 1990)

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 Garrett's Island House
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 1445 Garrett's Island Road N/A not for publication
city or town Plymouth X vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Washington code 187 zip code 27962

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 for 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 A. Cron SHPD 12/20/00
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or 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

Garrett's Island House
Name of Property

Washington County, NC
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

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

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

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1 | 0 | buildings |
| | | sites |
| | | structures |
| | | objects |
| 1 | 0 | Total |

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

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling
WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Georgian
Federal
Greek Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK
walls WOOD: WEATHERBOARD
roof WOOD: SHINGLE
other CONCRETE

Narrative Description

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

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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

Circa 1760

Significant Dates

Circa 1760

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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 moved from its original location.
- 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.

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Garrett's Island House
Name of Property

Washington County, NC
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 1 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 346740 3968300
Zone Easting Northing
2 _____

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing
4 _____

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 Heather Fearnbach
organization _____ date 5/1/2000
street & number 705 Mills Street telephone 919-828-6548
city or town Raleigh state NC zip code 27608

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 Meredith Johnston Saunders
street & number 310 Golf Road telephone 252-793-3287
city or town Plymouth state NC zip code 27692

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 listing. 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 20303.

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Garrett's Island House
Washington County, NC

7. Narrative Description

Garrett's Island House is located approximately two miles southeast of Plymouth, North Carolina at 1445 Garrett's Island Road (SR 1112). A small lawn with a magnolia tree, several dogwoods, two crepe myrtles and three cedar trees separates the house from the surrounding agricultural fields. The line of cedars and crepe myrtles across the front lawn marks the location of the old road bed leading to the house, known locally as the "Avenue of Cedars."¹ A modern split-rail fence delineates the northern edge of the lawn.

Garrett's Island House, constructed circa 1760, is a one-and-one-half-story frame, gambrel roof building with a new wood shingle roof, weatherboard siding, one surviving double-shouldered exterior end chimney and a brick pier foundation supplemented with concrete piers. The structure is three bays wide and two bays deep, with a one-story shed addition that is one bay deep on the eastern (rear) elevation. The shed roof porch on the western (front) elevation protects horizontal flush sheathing and two large mid-nineteenth-century replacement six-over-six wood sash windows. The window surrounds are devoid of ornamentation. The main entrance to the house is slightly off center, with a late nineteenth-century raised four-panel door surrounded by a two-part architrave. The porch floor was replaced during a recent stabilization of the building, and Greek Revival-style turned porch posts from the mid-nineteenth-century remodeling of the house are currently being stored inside. There are two dormers with vertically sheathed sides and replacement six-over-six wood sash windows on the front and rear elevations of the house.

A double-shouldered exterior chimney with five course American bond dominates the northern elevation. Two nine-over-nine wood sash windows on the first floor and two four-over-four wood sash windows on the second floor flank the chimney. The lapped weatherboard is not original.

The eastern (rear) elevation was originally covered with wide beaded weatherboard with a ten-inch exposure, as evidenced by a surviving paint line and wrought nail holes at ten-inch intervals in the framing. A surviving piece of this weatherboard is being used as a diagonal brace in the southeastern shed room. The addition of a late eighteenth-century porch across the rear elevation resulted in the replacement of the siding with horizontal flush sheathing.

¹ Frances Bickel Jones and Shirleyan Beacham Phelps, eds., Washington County, N.C.: A Tapestry (Winston-Salem: Josten Printing Company, 1998), 87.

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Two-thirds of the porch was originally open, as evidenced by the tapered porch posts beaded on all four sides that survive in the southeastern shed room. Soon after the construction of the porch, the remaining northeastern third of the porch became an enclosed shed room. Within ten years of the enclosure of the northeastern end of the porch, the southeastern end of the porch was also enclosed (indicated by the lack of weathering on the tapered porch posts), resulting in the surviving configuration of a small porch between two rooms. Half-round cedar joists support the shed addition.

The northeastern shed room is accessed off the porch, and shows evidence of an original window at the rear of the house now enclosed in the shed addition. There are two surviving six-over-six wood sash windows in the room, which was plastered at one time, with a plain chair rail and baseboard. The southeastern room of the shed addition is accessed through a mid-nineteenth-century door from the parlor that replaced an earlier window, and has one surviving six-over-six wood sash window.

The southern elevation lost a single-shouldered chimney in the past few years, and is now almost completely covered with tin sheathing to protect the building. There is a small amount of original beaded and tapered weatherboard at the uppermost section of the elevation.

Garrett's Island House has a hall-parlor plan. The hall has wainscoting covering the lower third of each wall, with the wainscoting on the northern and southern walls being a Federal-period horizontal flush sheathing with narrow boards, and the wainscoting on the eastern and western walls being a Greek Revival-period horizontal flush sheathing with wide boards. Two windows on the northern wall flank a simple Federal mantel. All of the original plaster walls have been replaced with gypsum board, and a late nineteenth-century tongue-in-groove ceiling covers the original plaster ceiling. A tight enclosed stair leads from the hall to the upstairs chambers.

The parlor has a plain chair rail and baseboard on all four walls, with another simple Federal mantel on the southern wall in the location of the now missing fireplace. A mid-nineteenth-century door to a later (no longer extant) wing replaces one of the two windows that originally flanked the chimney. The plaster in this room has also been replaced with gypsum board, and the original floor covered with a mid-twentieth century hardwood floor. There is evidence of whitewash on the diagonally sheathed exterior wall of the stair enclosure.

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The interior of the stair enclosure displays traces of what may be Prussian blue paint. At the top of the stairs is a closet added in the mid-nineteenth-century with a board-and-batten door. The closet ceiling and the eastern wall of the stair possess original plaster complete with riven lath and wrought nails. Other than removal of all other plaster, the second floor is in largely unaltered eighteenth-century condition. The partition walls for the two chambers are wide vertical flush boards with original pegboards on the chamber sides. The raised four-panel door into the northern chamber is a classic Georgian example, and the mantel in the room is a vernacular interpretation of the Federal style. The wide pine flooring installed with wrought L-head flooring nails is original. The door into the southern chamber is also a raised four-panel Georgian example with original H-L hinges and leather washers, as well as an original latch and keeper on the frame.

Integrity Statement

Garrett's Island House possesses a high degree of integrity due to its retention of a hall-parlor plan and gambrel-roof form throughout seven generations of use as a residence. The pristine eighteenth-century condition of the upstairs chamber partition walls, pegboards, doors, door hardware and flooring is a rare survival. The Federal mantles and wainscoting and Greek Revival wainscoting, columns and windows reflect adaptations of the house to current architectural styles without diminishing the significance of the earlier plan and form. In fact, the later renovations of the house allowed it to survive changing architectural fashion and remain extant today. The property owners are using the Secretary of the Interior's Standards to restore the house, and have replaced a later tin roof with wood shingles and removed some mid-twentieth century drywall from the downstairs rooms.

8. Statement of Significance

Summary Statement

Garrett's Island House, thought to be the oldest extant dwelling in Washington County, is an important example of a rural plantation house of the late Colonial Period in North Carolina. The house reflects the English tradition of building in the mid-eighteenth century through its hall-parlor plan and gambrel roof that maximized room in the upper chambers of the one-and-one-half-story house. Later trends in architectural taste are also evident in modifications to the house in the first

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half of the nineteenth century, including Federal-period wainscoting and mantles and Greek Revival-period wainscoting, columns and windows on the front of the house. There are few surviving, relatively intact examples of houses of this scale and finish built for the emerging planter class in the coastal plain of North Carolina, making this structure eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C. The site on which the house was constructed was at a higher elevation than the surrounding swampy land, thus the property became known as Garrett's Island after the Garretts purchased it. Seventh-generation descendants of the original owners are in the process of restoring Garrett's Island House, which remains in a protected rural setting.

Historical Background

Garrett's Island House was constructed on land granted to Jonathan Corpew by John Earl Granville. Daniel Garrett subsequently acquired the property. The original deed, dated December 22, 1747, and the accompanying survey are still in the possession of Garrett family descendants. In Daniel Garrett's will, dated January 14, 1758, he leaves property including his "manor plantation" and land in "Baly's Island" to his children. His son John married Sarah Carkeet in April of 1760, and most likely constructed Garrett's Island House shortly thereafter as a statement of his success as a planter. The Garretts grew rice, flax, and corn on the surrounding farmland. By 1782, John was paying taxes on 640 acres of land, eight slaves, seven horses, and seventeen cows. According to the 1786 census of Tyrrell County, John's household consisted of seven family members and ten slaves. Due to their land and property holdings, the Garretts would have been considered upper-middle class plantation owners. John Garrett's will, dated November 7, 1790, gives his wife Sarah "the use and occupation of one-half of the Island whereon I know live, including the home plantation and other improvements...." At Sarah's death the house and property then passed to John's son Joseph, who was born in 1769 and died in 1835.²

Joseph married Mary Elizabeth Wynne in 1792 and had seven children including Alfred Franklin Garrett, born in 1807. Alfred Franklin inherited the Garrett's Island property after the deaths of his father in 1835 and his older brother John in 1839. According to the 1850 census of Washington County, Alfred Franklin was a farmer owning 8,000 acres. His household consisted of two children,

² Mary Weeks Lambeth, Memories and Records of Eastern North Carolina (Nashville, T.N.: Curly Printing Company, 1957), 186; 1782 Tax List for Tyrrell County; 1786 Census of Tyrrell County; Tyrrell County Marriage Bonds.

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Joseph and Caroline, by his first wife Cary Ann Spruill (d. 1843), his second wife Emily H. Staton and their daughter Henrietta. After Emily's death, Alfred Franklin married a third time, to Mary Eliza Cotton. They had five more children. Their eldest son, Alfred Cotton, born in 1855, inherited the Garrett's Island property at his father's death in 1888. After the death of Alfred Cotton Garrett in 1934, the property passed to Laura Smith Johnston, daughter of Alfred Cotton's sister Caroline.

Twenty-four family members are buried in the family graveyard, located across the road from Garrett's Island House. Local legend holds that the appearance of a phantom black carriage in the Avenue of Cedars always foretold a death in the family. Meredith Johnston Saunders, a seventh-generation member of the Garrett family, now owns the Garrett's Island property, including family furniture that was used in the house. Meredith's son Robert and his wife Jeannine are currently restoring the house to its mid-nineteenth-century appearance.³

Architecture Context

Garrett's Island House is one of a few surviving examples of gambrel-roof, hall-parlor plan plantation houses of the late Colonial period in eastern North Carolina. The gambrel-roof form, brought to the American colonies with early English builders, was popular for well-finished urban and rural houses during the Georgian era. These houses were often a hall-parlor plan, with the upstairs chambers benefiting from additional space provided by the gambrel roof. The house is similar in plan and style to several other surviving National Register-listed houses in the region, including Old Town Plantation House, the Van Der Veer House, the Owens House, and the King House. These buildings exemplify the new wealth of the emerging planter and merchant classes and the growing availability of artisans in the building trade in North Carolina by the 1750s and 1760s.⁴ By the early nineteenth century the gambrel-roof form died out rapidly in houses constructed by wealthy property-owners and was replaced by newer architectural styles. Vernacular structures continued to reflect established roof framing techniques, such as the gambrel roof. Garrett's Island House is extremely rare in that it still possesses its Georgian-era gambrel-roof form and hall-parlor plan. The house also reflects two of the most popular architectural styles in North Carolina during the first half of the eighteenth century, Federal and Greek Revival, in later superficial changes.

³ Tyrrell County Marriage Bonds; Lambeth, *Memories*, 190; United States Census of 1850, Washington County, North Carolina, Family/Dwelling Schedule, Household 114; Washington County Historical Society, *Historic Washington County* (Plymouth: Washington County Historical Society, n.d.), 20.

⁴ Catherine Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 20.

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The later changes do not diminish the integrity of the structure, however, but have allowed Garrett's Island House to remain in use by seven generations of the same family.

There are only a few other National Register-listed gambrel-roof plantation houses in eastern North Carolina. Old Town Plantation House, circa 1742, (NR 1983), was moved to its current location in the vicinity of Battleboro in Edgecombe County. This one-and-a-half story gambrel-roof frame dwelling with a hall-parlor plan, a rear shed addition and end chimneys is thought to be the oldest dwelling in Edgecombe County. Like Garrett's Island House, Old Town Plantation House serves as an excellent example of the well-built houses of the mid-eighteenth-century planter class.⁵

The Owens House, (NR 1970), located in Halifax, is a circa 1760 two-story gambrel-roof frame dwelling with a side passage and two rooms on each floor. The structure is maintained as a house museum at Historic Halifax State Historic Site. The circa 1790 Van Der Veer House (NR 1970) in Bath is a one-and-a-half-story frame house with a hall-parlor plan and a gambrel roof. This building was moved to its current location and its interior has been altered to function as exhibit space for Historic Bath State Historic Site.⁶

The King House (also known as the King-Bazemore House), constructed circa 1763 in Bertie County, (NR 1982), is another finely finished one-and-a-half story house with a gambrel roof. It differs from other examples in that the structure is frame with brick ends, interior chimneys, and elaborate paneled interiors. The house was moved to its current site at Hope Plantation in 1978.⁷

A handful of Georgian-era gambrel-roof plantation houses have been assessed during county surveys and found to be significantly altered. The Thomas B. Riddick House, in Gates County, is a late eighteenth-century gambrel-roof house with simple Georgian detailing. Its orientation was reversed in the 1940s when the road was moved, resulting in the front porch and rear shed rooms being transposed. The Sanderson-Sutton House, in the vicinity of New Hope township in Perquimans

⁵ Survey and Planning Unit, State Department of Archives and History, "Old Town Plantation," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 1971.

⁶ Raymond F. Pisney, "Historic Halifax State Historic Site," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 1969.

⁷ Survey and Planning Unit, State Department of Archives and History, "King House," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 1971.

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County, is a significantly altered example of a hall-parlor plan gambrel-roof house of the late eighteenth century. The Parrish House is one of the oldest gambrel-roof houses in Edgecombe County. Many of the original Georgian-period interior details appear to be intact under modern materials.

Garrett's Island House possesses a degree of integrity of setting and physical appearance that exceeds most other surviving eastern North Carolina examples of rural gambrel-roof plantation houses of the late Colonial period. As the house has never been moved, there is potential for archaeological investigation and other research. The house is significant not only due to its status as the oldest extant house in Washington County, but also because of its fine representation of a rare and rapidly disappearing early architectural form.

9. Bibliography

Primary Sources

1782 Tax List for Tyrrell County, North Carolina. Found at
<http://www.whetzel.com/barnesc/genweb/TYR1782A.HTM>.

1786 Census of Tyrrell County. Found at
<http://www.whetzel.com/barnesc/genweb/TYR178406.HTM>.

Tyrrell County Marriage Bonds. Found at <http://patriot.net/~cpbarnes/TYRMARGE.HTM>.

United States Census of 1850- Washington County, North Carolina. Family/Dwelling Schedule. Found at
<http://c23.rootsweb.com/usgenweb/archives/nc/washington/census/1850/pg00108.txt>.

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Secondary Sources

Bishir, Catherine. North Carolina Architecture. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990.

Jones, Frances Bickel, and Shirleyan Beacham Phelps, eds. Washington County, N.C.: A Tapestry. Winston-Salem: Josten Printing Company, 1998.

Lambeth, Mary Weeks. Memories and Records of Eastern North Carolina. Nashville, T.N.: Curley Printing Company, 1957.

Pisney, Raymond F. "Historic Halifax State Historic Site." National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 1969.

Survey and Planning Unit, State Department of Archives and History. "Old Town Plantation." National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 1971.

Survey and Planning Unit, State Department of Archives and History. "King House." National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 1978.

Washington County Historical Society. Historic Washington County. Plymouth: Washington County Historical Society, n.d.

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property consists of one acre of Washington County tax parcel 6335 on the enclosed orthophoto map section of Washington County. Scale 1"=200'.

Boundary Justification

The nominated tract is the original site of the circa 1760 Garrett's Island House and provides a historically appropriate setting for the building.

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Garrett's Island House
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Photograph Catalog

All photographs by Heather Fearnbach, 705 Mills Street, Raleigh, NC, on February 25, 2000.
Negatives located at the North Carolina SHPO.

1. Front (western) façade
2. Side (nothern) elevation
3. Rear (eastern) elevation
4. Setting- surrounding agricultural fields
5. Interior- Hall, Federal-period mantle & wainscoting
6. Interior- Hall, enclosed stair
7. Interior- Parlor, Greek Revival columns in storage
8. Interior- Upstairs chamber, vernacular Federal mantle

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