

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR

MULTIPLE RESOURCE OR  THEMATIC NOMINATION

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Richardson Houses Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

NW side Richardson Dr. between Coach Rd. & Woodland Dr.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Reidsville

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

North Carolina

CODE

037

COUNTY

Rockingham

CODE

157

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

OCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

**ACCESSIBLE**

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

N/A

NO

MILITARY

OTHER vacant

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Dr. G. Irvin Richardson

John D. and Jan Paschal

STREET & NUMBER

1305 Coach Road

1602 Richardson Drive

CITY, TOWN

Reidsville

VICINITY OF

STATE

North Carolina

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Rockingham County Register of Deeds, Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Highway 65

CITY, TOWN

Wentworth

STATE

North Carolina

**6 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Allison Harris Black, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Black & Black  
Preservation Consultants

DATE

January 1986

STREET & NUMBER

620 Wills Forest Street

TELEPHONE

919 828-4616

CITY OR TOWN

Raleigh

STATE

North Carolina

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE <u>1912</u>

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

The Robert Payne Richardson Houses Historic District consists of a complex of twenty-two buildings and structures sited on approximately thirty acres of land located some one and one-half miles southwest of the center of Reidsville in Rockingham County. Standing on sites elevated above the surrounding countryside are the three principal buildings in the district, the Robert Payne Richardson House I (ca. 1842), the Robert Payne Richardson House II (ca. 1860), and the Robert Payne Richardson House III, Belmont (1912). The houses are accompanied by a variety of outbuildings, both domestic and farm-related, on the three separate tracts comprising the district--the eleven-acre House I tract, the five-acre House II tract, and the fourteen-acre Belmont tract. These tracts are only a small portion of the more than 1600 acres which made up the Richardson plantation in its heyday. Although the surviving farm buildings attest to the once-significant farming operation, the acreage which remains associated with the houses now consists of woodland (behind and to the west of all three houses), terraced lawns (around the Robert Payne Richardson Houses II and III), and fallow fields (around the Robert Payne Richardson House I).

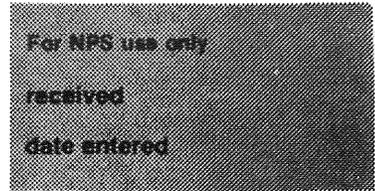
The total complex as it exists today consists of the three principal houses, a 1968 brick ranch-style house built for Lucy I. Richardson, a tenant house situated between the first and third houses, two garages, and miscellaneous other outbuildings, both farm-related and domestic. Most of the latter buildings are unused and some are in ruinous condition, but as part of the total complex, they portray the life of what was a large working farm well into the 20th century.

It is believed that the house built by Robert Payne Richardson Sr. in the early 1840s originally stood on the site now occupied by Belmont, built by his son in 1912. This appears likely since the Belmont site is clearly the most commanding of the three on which the Richardson houses stand. Tradition also holds that the second house built by Richardson was joined to the first house, either directly or by a breezeway, and that the two were separated and moved to their present locations to the northeast and southwest of Belmont when the latter was constructed. Such a move might explain the fact that the three oldest (brick) chimneys, as well as the brick foundation, of the first house appear to be of much later construction than the early 1840s date attributed to the house.

As originally constructed, the first Robert Payne Richardson House was a low, two-story, mortise-and-tenon frame house, one-room deep, built on a hall and parlor plan with a side gable roof, exterior end chimneys, and Greek Revival trim on both exterior and interior. The standing seam tin roof now extends to the rear to cover a lower two-story shed addition. Further, a lower shed roof also covers a one-story porch and room addition which spans the rear of the house. The current chimneys, two on the northeast elevation and one on the southwest elevation, are single shoulder, of stretcher bond brick, with corbeled caps. A flue stack of cinder block has been added on the southwest elevation for the two-story shed addition, and a small brick flue stack rises in the northwest corner of the rear one-story shed room.

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The side elevations have flush eaves with shallow returns.

A one-story, shed roofed porch shelters approximately two-thirds of the three-bay principal facade. The porch treatment is unique in Reidsville, as it has wrought-iron railings with ornamental cast iron panels for the balustrade, supports, and brackets. It is believed that the ironwork was originally a part of the second house built by Robert Payne Richardson (ca. 1860) and was attached to the smaller house when the two were separated and moved around 1912.

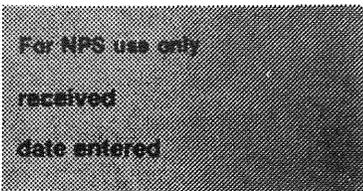
The first-floor facade consists of single six-over-six windows set in molded surrounds with incised corner blocks flanking the entrance where this surround is repeated. The door appears to be of later date, perhaps a later 19th or early 20th century change. The lower half consists of a single flat panel, while the upper half is glazed. Two symmetrically placed windows set in molded surrounds are located above the front porch and light the second-floor rooms of the house.

A one-story hipped roof porch supported by double colonette porch posts spans the original section of the house on the southwest elevation, from which a two-panel door opens to the right (east) of the chimney breast. This porch treatment may reflect the style of the original front porch. Concrete slab porch floors on both the front and south elevations are of recent vintage. The small windows flank the chimney stack on the south elevation just below the roof line. The lower two-story, shedroofed addition is lighted by one window on each floor of both side elevations, although they are not parallel between elevations. These windows are set in flat board surrounds and have six over six sash; they are identical to the two windows which light the one-story shed room.

The interior of the house is simply finished, with plaster walls and simple Greek Revival trim. The mantel in the parlor is marbled; according to the current tenants, who have lived here for at least twenty years, the baseboards in this room were also originally marbled, but have been painted over. A partition wall just to the left of the entrance separates the two rooms, and an enclosed stair rises in the northwest corner of the smaller room. What appears to be an exterior door opens in the rear wall of the larger room, from which one steps down to the rear shed room. A window to the right of the door has been plastered over on the main section side, but can still be seen in the rear room (now a kitchen). These openings, together with the appearance of the exterior walls on the side elevations, support the theory that the original house consisted of the front one-room deep, two-story hall and parlor plan section. The rear shed rooms, with their nine over six first floor windows and six over six second floor windows, were probably relatively early additions. They may have been constructed as early as the 1850s to accommodate Richardson's growing family, prior to the construction of the larger second house.

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A winding, rutted dirt lane leads from Richardson Drive to this house, which is separated from the Belmont site by a field and the large lawn of the latter. Several large trees shade the first house which has a shallow yard rising above the lane in front and a larger grassed area to the sides and rear. Farm lanes lead to several farm buildings--a frame pack house which stands some 50 yards northwest of the house and three log tobacco barns and a two-story frame tenant house which are grouped about 50 yards to the southwest. The tobacco barns and pack house are in good repair, having been used by the current tenants until the early 1980s.

The more imposing second house built by Robert Payne Richardson about 1860 now sits on a naturally terraced five-acre tract of land elevated above the surrounding terrain and some 250 yards northeast of its original location, where it was connected to the earlier house. House II is reached by way of a paved drive which winds uphill from Richardson Drive, some 200 feet to the northeast. Mature long-leaf pine trees line the drive, and a low stone wall climbs about twenty-five feet of the northwest side of the drive, about two-thirds of the way to the house. Behind the wall, the terrain slopes away from the relatively level house site, ending in pine woods some 150 yards to the west.

The house is a two-story, frame, single-pile, L-shaped structure topped by a low hipped roof of standing seam tin and presenting a three-bay facade. The brick foundation has been partially rebuilt, as have the interior end chimneys above the roof line; this was probably done when the house was moved early in the second decade of the twentieth century. Clad in plain weather-board siding, the house exhibits exterior trim in both the Greek Revival and Italianate styles, making it architecturally transitional between these two styles which enjoyed widespread popularity in the middle decades of the nineteenth century.

In contrast, the full-facade, one-story front porch and the one-story porch spanning the south elevation are Colonial Revival in character and date from the early twentieth century, probably from the time of the move. The original porch is thought to have consisted of the wrought-and-cast ironwork now found on the earlier house. The flush sheathing which extends approximately four feet to each side of the main entrance does suggest the existence of a much smaller original porch.

The entrance consists of double-leaf, four-panel doors flanked by beveled glass sidelights with paneled spandrels and a tripartite transome with several etched, colored glass panes surviving. Elongated, raised diamond patterns ornament the surround--vertical on the sides and horizontal above the transom. To either side of the entrance are one-story projecting bays, each of which has a four over four window on the front, flanked by two over two windows on the angled sides of the bays. All other original windows are six over six sash set in two-part shouldered surrounds with a raised applied diamond pattern in the pediment. Other surviving original ornamentation includes

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classical corner boards with round-headed panels and decorative curvilinear eaves brackets on the facade, the north elevation, and the south elevation of the front section.

Slender, classical columns, three at each corner support the hipped roof of the front porch, while the side porch has square columns. A projecting, pedimented pavillion accents the entrance bay, with five granite steps rising to the wood-floored porch.

It seems likely that a rear porch originally extended from the rear door along the north elevation of the inside of the L. This area has been enclosed and expanded to provide a large, modern kitchen and an informal sitting room, with a smaller porch between the kitchen and front section. A one-story, gable and shed-roofed addition extends from the rear wall of the two-story rear wing.

On the north elevation, which includes the front section and the rear wing, there are three windows on the second floor and two windows and a side entrance on the first. Vertical flush sheathing, suggesting an earlier porch, flanks the door, which has two flat panels in the lower half and paired, round-topped glass panes in the upper. Chinese Chippendale panels serve as balustrades for the small gabled stoop which shelters the entrance.

The interior of the house follows a basic, single-pile, central-hall plan, with a second formal stair hall--leading from the side entrance--connecting the front section of the house with rooms in the rear wing. Walls are finished with plaster, and the handsome woodwork combines Greek Rivival and Italianate styling, with most of the finish being typical of simple, vernacular Greek Revival details.

The main stair hall and south parlor have the most elaborate trim, with molded door and window surrounds with flat corner blocks. A graceful, curving, open-string staircase rises in two legs from the front; it has a heavy, turned newel post, slender turned balusters, and raised scrollwork on the strings. A door in the rear wall under the stair landing now leads to a small informal sitting room, although it seems likely that the door originally opened to a rear porch. In the south parlor, molded surrounds with central cartouches frame niches--beside the chimney breast--with french windows (not original) opening to the side porch. The niches flank the fireplace which has a stone (probably marbleized slate) arched Italianate mantel with a central raised cartouche.

Tall baseboards with molded upper portions are found throughout the house, although the remainder of the trim is generally simpler than that found in the south parlor. Door and window surrounds are post and lintel with mitered backbands, doors have four flat panels (the upper two panels have rounded tops), and mantels are post and lintel.

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One room in the rear wing and the rear hall do exhibit somewhat more elaborate trim than other rooms. The rear hall connects the right (north) parlor with the rear ell and provides egress through the side entrance. Its staircase is similar to that in the main hall, with a curving, two-leg configuration, heavy newel post, slender balusters, and scrolled strings. In the southeast corner of the hall, a modern bathroom has been added under the stair. Immediately to the rear (west) of this hall is a room now used as a formal dining room. Its mantel is post and lintel, with raised pyramidal central cartouche and corner blocks below the shelf. Behind this room is a simply-detailed, unheated room now used as a spare bedroom. The room above the dining room, which the current owners are using for storage while they work in the rest of the house, features the simple finish typical throughout most of the house.

A second modern bathroom has been added in the large central hallway on the second floor, between the two front bedrooms. The two bathrooms, together with the large kitchen and informal sitting room are the principal interior changes which have been made to the house. The majority of these changes were made during the 1954-1983 ownership and occupancy of the Z. Griff Smith family.

Behind the house is a frame, gable-and-shed-roofed garage and storage shed, probably dating from the third or fourth decade of the twentieth century. No other outbuildings associated with the house survive. Completing the site are mature long-leaf pine, cedar, maple and oak trees, a grape arbor, and relatively recent foundation plantings.

Belmont, the magnificent Neo-Classical Revival house built for Robert Payne Richardson, Jr., in 1912, stands on a majestic site elevated above the surrounding terrain, reached by a paved driveway winding uphill from Richardson Drive. A variety of mature trees, including oaks, cedars, maples, and hollies ornament the expansive lawn. A huge magnolia stands in front of the house to the left of the portico, so that, in summer, the house is barely visible. Boxwoods, rhododendron and ivy comprise the principal foundation plantings. An ancient grape arbor fills a round space in the winding driveway some thirty feet from the northeast corner of the house, while a circular boxwood garden with a central fountain adds texture to the south lawn. To the immediate rear of the house is a group of miscellaneous domestic outbuildings, and a seldom used farm lane leads to several farm structures, all of which are shown on the sketch map and described in the inventory list.

Resting on a tan brick foundation and a full basement with arched ventilators, the frame house rises two stories to a full attic and is topped by a red ceramic tile hipped roof, which is embellished by a balustraded widow's walk and large classical, gabled dormers--one large dormer on the front and rear and two smaller ones on each side elevation. Tan brick chimneys with corbeled courses and caps rise in interior end positions on the side and rear elevations.

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The most striking feature of the exterior of the house is the monumental elliptical central portico with balustraded flat roof, wide bracketed eaves, two-story unfluted Ionic columns, and granite staircase. A one-story, hipped-roof porch with Tuscan columns on battered brick and granite piers spans the facade and wraps around the north elevation to a porte cochere and around the north elevation to a porte cochere and around the south elevation to a projecting pedimented pavilion with stairs leading to the south lawn. The porch railings consist of paired, three-inch thick, round, horizontal metal bars. The porch floor is glazed brick, while the ceiling is stained tongue and groove with exposed beaded beams.

The basic form of the house is a large square (approximately 54 feet by 54 feet) with a two-story rear bedroom and bathroom wing, one-and two-story bays on the south elevation, and a (formerly detached) one-story, hipped-roof structure. The latter was the original kitchen and laundry, connected to the main house by an unheated porch and a butler's pantry (the latter was located just to the rear of the dining room) which were converted to a modern kitchen in 1968. The original kitchen was then used to house a large hot-water heater, the original wood stove, a charcoal grill, and a washer and dryer. Behind the portico and porch, large tripartite one-over-one sash windows set in flat board surrounds flank the slightly projecting main entrance, which consists of double-leaf, single-panel doors with beveled and leaded glass sidelights and three-part transom, an entrance configuration repeated on the north elevation entrance from the porte-cochere. The doors are of mahogany with decorative marquetry, an ornamental feature found on doors throughout the house.

The second floor of the facade has a similar fenestration pattern, although the door is single with a beveled and leaded glass upper half and transom. This door opens to a balustraded balcony set into the top of the one-story porch. On the north elevation, the tripartite one-over-sash windows above the porte cochere entrance repeat the decorative beveled and leaded glass treatment, which is again seen directly opposite on the stair landing.

Both the main and porte cochere entrances open to vestibules floored with mosaic tiles. From either vestibule, the most arresting element of the house's interior becomes apparent. This is the room-width, Greek cross-shaped hall with its monumental stair rising majestically from the center of the cross in a broad sweeping central flight to an inter-floor landing on the south wall, with a dog-leg on each side. The curving banister, supported by a slender turned balusters, spans the second floor stair opening, descends along the dog-leg, and turns to sweep down the central flight, ending in a scroll.

Coved ceilings with molded picture rails are the rule throughout the house, as are parquét floors with a different border pattern in each room. The hallway on both floors has low, paneled wainscotting, fluted Ionic pilasters at the corners, and papered wall panels framed by narrow moldings. The ceilings are painted with a trellis pattern with intertwined flowers, and the lighting fix-

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tures are original. An arched opening at the west end of the first-floor hall leads to the rear portions of the house, and arches supported by square, fluted Ionic posts on paneled plinths frame the south entrance and the doors to a breakfast room contained in the one-story projecting bay.

From the central hall, the front rooms are entered by pocket doors of mahogany and marguetry. The south room has a single door with beveled glass transom in its west wall, while the north room has beveled glass pocket doors in the west wall. An identical door pattern to that of the south, front room is found in the south, rear room. The north, rear room has single doors with transoms in the east, west and south walls. Portiere rods at all the pockets doors still exist, although the portieres themselves have been removed.

The south, front room appears to have been the main formal parlor; it has an elegant marble mantel with an ornate mirror above it flanked by prisms sconces, a more ornate picture molding with gilt beading below, and wallpaper panels outlined in gilt and framed by an applied molding in a vine pattern.

Across (and north of) the hall is a less formal library with tall paneled wainscot and mantel topped by a deep, stepped molding. This wall treatment is repeated in the dining room--the south, rear room--where three beveled and leaded glass windows light the room from the second projecting bay on the south elevation. Above the wainscot, the wall is covered with bronze-painted Lincrusta-Walton paper, giving the room a very formal appearance. The ceiling has exposed beaded and molded beams separating painted panels. South of the formal dining room is the breakfast room.

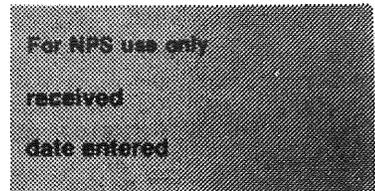
Other rooms on the first floor include a bedroom in the northwest corner of the main block, which has a built-in bookcase and a handsome Colonial Revival mantel with paired engaged colonettes and an applied lamp design in the central cartouche. Behind this room, in the rear ell, are a handsome tiled bath and a children's playroom, joined to the main house by a hallway. A glassed-in rear porch completes the first floor.

Much simpler Colonial Revival and late Victorian mantels are found in the five rooms on the second floor, one at each corner of the main block and one in the rear ell, all of which were bedrooms. The large bathroom in the rear wing, with its mosaic tile floor, ceramic tile wainscot, pedestal sink, clawfoot bathtub, and flush toilet is identical to the one on the first floor. A narrow bathroom runs between the hall and southwest room on the second floor, with a half bath wedged in at the top of the west leg of the stair. These bathrooms are finished with ceramic and mosaic tile.

Completing the embellishments on the second floor are several interesting features. Two large cedar closets curve out into the hallway at its east end on each side of the door to the balcony. An arched opening leads to an alcove at the north end of the hall, above the vestibule, which is illuminated by be-

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veled and leaded glass windows. Each of the front rooms has a pedestal sink in the northwest corner, lighted by pendant wall sconces affixed to five-foot panel with a decorative molding. Enclosed spaces in the outside corner of each of these front corner rooms originally housed showers, but were converted for use as closets in 1968, when the George Irvin Richardson family moved into the house.

In the left corner of the rear ell is a service staircase, which descends to the service portion of the first floor--originally the porch leading to the detached kitchen/laundry. A second staircase here rises to the attic, which is a fitting crown for this magnificent house. The walls of this huge, open space are fully paneled in cedar, making it a gigantic cedar closet. In addition, the panels open to reveal further storage areas under the roof for linens, rugs, woolens, and furs. A coffered cedar ceiling completes the effect. From the handsome brickwork and arched ventilators of its foundation to the glorious red ceramic tile roof above the cedar-lined attic, Belmont is a noble residence reflecting the grandeur of a more affluent period in the history of Reidsville and the Richardson family.

In recent years, the magnificence of Belmont has suffered the deterioration typical of houses that stand vacant for any length of time. Poorly maintained gutters, in particular, have caused water damage at the eaves and may have affected wall materials, as well. At present, efforts are being made to arrest these negative conditions, but sustained occupancy of the house will become increasingly vital as time passes. The house is for sale, but its size and location have so far deterred potential buyers.

Eleven domestic and farm outbuildings round out the complex associated with Belmont, the home built by Robert Payne Richardson, Jr. Although several are ruinous, most are still contributing elements in the district because of the information they can provide about life on a large working plantation from the early 1840s until the middle of the twentieth century.

A descriptive listing of all buildings and structures in the district, with a notation as to their significance, follows. It is keyed to the attached sketch map.

1. Robert Payne Richardson House I (ca. 1842) - contributing. See above for description.

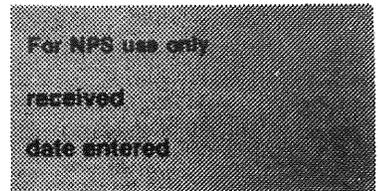
2. Robert Payne Richardson House II (ca. 1860) - contributing. See above for description.

3. Belmont, Robert Payne Richardson House III (1912) - contributing. See above for description.

4. Lucy I. Richardson House (1968) - non-contributing. One-story, gable-roofed brick ranch house, built for the widow of Robert Payne Richardson III, one year after the latter's death. After Mrs. Richardson's death in 1981, her son, Dr. George Irvin Richardson, and his family moved to this house from Belmont.

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5. Tenant House (ca. 1900) - contributing. One-story, T-shaped frame house with a gable and hip roof of composition shingles. Not originally associated with the Richardson Houses, it was moved to its present location in the 1930s from a site some 3 miles to the west. Since that time it has been occupied by servants working at Belmont.

6. Automobile Garage (ca. 1930) - contributing. One-story frame garage and storage shed with gable and shed roof. Although a definite construction date for this structure is not known, it seems likely that it was built between the time that the house was moved to this location (ca. 1912) and the acquisition of the house by the Hobgoods in 1937. Its small size reflects the more modest Model A and Model T cars produced during the 1920s. It is the only outbuilding surviving with the Robert Payne Richardson House II.

7. Pack House (ca. 1920) - contributing. One-story frame building with front gable roof. The principal cash crop produced on the Richardson plantation from the 1850s until the cessation of the farming operation in the early 1970s was tobacco. This building was used until the early 1980s by Fletcher Carter, a tobacco farmer, who has leased the Robert Payne Richardson House I for more than twenty years.

8. Tenant House (ca. 1900) - non-contributing. Two-story frame, gable-roofed building with finished interior and exterior end chimneys. Covered with tarpaper siding. Front porch has collapsed. This structure was moved to its current location in the 1960s when a 7.75-acre tract of the Richardson property at the corner of Richardson and Sherwood drives to the southeast of the houses was sold to a local church. Because of its deteriorating condition and its relatively recent move to its present location, it is a non-contributing element within the district.

9. Tobacco Barn (ca. 1920) - contributing. Roughly finished log building with gable roof.

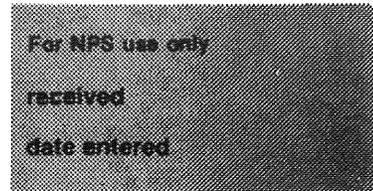
10. Tobacco Barn (ca. 1920) - contributing. Roughly finished log building with gable roof and covered work area.

11. Tobacco Barn (ca. 1920) - contributing. Well-crafted, log building with square notching, gable roof and covered work area. As already noted, tobacco was long the principal cash crop of the Richardson plantation, until farming operations ceased in the early 1970s. These three tobacco barns were used as recently as the early 1980s by Fletcher Carter, a retired tobacco farmer who leases the Robert Payne Richardson House I, and are an important reminder of the nature of the Richardson plantation throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth.

12. Automobile Garage (ca. 1930) - contributing. Large, frame building clad in German siding with standing seam tin gable roof. The relatively small openings reflect the smaller size of early automobiles. This building also re-

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presents the continued family use of the property, as automobiles replaced wagons and buggies as the principal mode of transport.

13. Gas House (ca. 1912) - contributing. Small concrete block structure with arched tile roof with pumping equipment. When Robert Payne Richardson, Jr., began construction of Belmont in late 1911, electricity was not yet available in rural Rockingham County, although Richardson ensured that his house was built with the necessary equipment to take advantage of electricity when it did become available. Until that time, acetylene gas was required for lighting and heating the house, and this building housed the equipment required to provide the gas to the house.

14. Smokehouse (1912) - contributing. Square, one-story concrete block structure with low hipped roof. This is the original smokehouse built with Belmont, in which meats were preserved for the use of the Richardson family. It was used through most of the first half of the twentieth century.

15. Maid's House (1912) - contributing. Small dilapidated frame, gable-roofed, one-room structure used to house servants at Belmont at various times during its history. A stove heated the small building.

16. Charcoal Grill (ca. 1912) - contributing. Large stone and brick structure, erected at the same time as Belmont and standing immediately behind the house.

17. Playhouse (ca. 1960) - non-contributing. Tiny frame building with gable roof, moved to this location from a house in Reidsville, when the family of Dr. George Irvin Richardson moved to Belmont in 1968.

18. Barn (ca. 1900) - contributing. Large frame structure with gable and monitor roof and central passage. Interior contains horse stalls and tack rooms, as well as large open area and hayloft. Probably predates the construction of Belmont and, therefore, has long association with the operation of the Richardson plantation. After farming operations ceased in the early 1970s, the barn was used to stable domestic riding horses owned by the family of Dr. George Irvin Richardson.

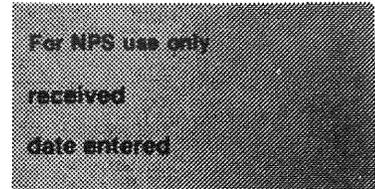
19. Wagon shed (ca. 1912) - contributing. Board and batten structure with standing seam tin roof.

20. Wagon shed (ca. 1912) - contributing. Frame structure in ruinous condition. Both wagon sheds are believed to have been constructed simultaneously with Belmont and were used to shelter transportation equipment employed in the farming operation, as well as the buggies and wagons used by the family.

21. Crib (ca. 1912) - contributing. Contemporary with Belmont, the frame, double-pen building with gable roof was used to store corn, grain, and feed for the farm livestock which were part of the large farming operation.

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22. Barn (ca. 1900) - contributing. Although this large frame structure is in ruinous condition through lack of use, it remains an integral part of the complex of farm buildings associated with the Richardson plantation. In particular, this buildings once housed a wood saw which was used to finish the cedar lumber used in the construction of Belmont.

Total number:      Contributing buildings and structures - 19  
                         Non-contributing buildings and structures - 3

**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

\_\_\_\_\_ NATIONAL        X   STATE      \_\_\_\_\_ LOCAL

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES      ca. 1840-1930      BUILDER/ARCHITECT      Unknown/George E. Barber

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Robert Payne Richardson Houses Historic District, on the outskirts of Reidsville, North Carolina, is significant in the history of the town and the state as an outstanding example of a plantation complex chronicling the rise and decline in the fortunes of a family and a community over a period of nearly one hundred and fifty years. The associated buildings, including three principal houses and an important group of surviving domestic and farm-related out-buildings, combine to present a graphic picture of the development of the plantation complex through the continuous occupation of one family from the early 1840s to the present, although the majority of buildings were built prior to 1930. Built about 1842, the first house, a modest, hall-and-parlor plan Greek Revival structure, is probably the oldest house surviving in Reidsville and predates by some thirty years the incorporation of the town. Its builder, Robert Payne Richardson, Sr. (1820-1909), who was only twenty-two at the time, became a prominent plantation owner, merchant and tobacco manufacturer in the second half of the nineteenth century. The more substantial structure that he added to the earlier house about 1860 reflects the steady rise in his fortunes. The Italianate elements incorporated in the basically Greek Revival house anticipated the strong popularity of the Italianate style for substantial Reidsville residences in the quarter century following the Civil War. Richardson continued to live in the large, two-period house until his death in 1909. His son of the same name (Robert Payne Richardson, Jr., 1855-1922) carried on the family traditions

## CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

A. The Robert Payne Richardson Houses Historic District is associated with the history of the town of Reidsville, North Carolina, from the early 1840s to the present, with the continuous occupation by one family of a property during the same period, and with life on a substantial tobacco plantation in the late nineteenth century.

B. The district is associated with the lives of Robert Payne Richardson, Sr. (1820-1909) and his son, Robert Payne Richardson, Jr. (1855-1922), both of whom were prominent tobacco manufacturers and plantation owners in Reidsville and Rockingham County.

C. The Robert Payne Richardson House I is one of the few surviving examples of Greek Revival architecture in Reidsville, while the House II is a transitional Greek Revival/Italianate style house, whose Italianate details anticipated the popularity of that style for many substantial residences built in Reidsville in the 25 years following the Civil War. Belmont, House III (1912), is the grandest example of Neo-Classical Revival residential architecture in Reidsville and one of the finest in the state.

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in tobacco manufacturing and farming, increasing the family's affluence and position in the community. In 1912, he separated and moved the earlier houses to locations nearby on the family property and began construction of a magnificent Neo-Classical Revival house. Belmont, as this house is known, is an opulent example of the style, one of the finest in the state, and it amply demonstrated his family's prosperity. Unfortunately, by the time of his death in 1922, the family had become land poor, and since then, as the local one-industry economy has declined, farming operations have ceased on the property (in the early 1970s) and most of the more than 1600 acres once associated with the plantation have been sold off. Today, the district is composed of three tracts of land totaling just thirty acres, with one five-acre tract containing the second house having been sold out of the family in the 1930s. The surviving twenty-two buildings and structures, including domestic and farm-related outbuildings, are likely only a portion of the buildings which were needed to support the plantation in its heyday. Remains of some of these buildings may exist, and together with the surviving elements, including landscaping of the splendid site, they can provide extensive and valuable information about plantation life in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as well as the story of a unique and important family.

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D. The complex of buildings and the site on which they are located are likely to yield information important in our history. The domestic and farm-related outbuildings which survive, together with the possible remains of others which do not survive, reflect a single family's occupation and use of a diminishing tract of land over a period of nearly one hundred and fifty years.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The complex of buildings built by and associated with the lives of Robert Payne Richardson, Sr., his son, Robert Payne Richardson, Jr., and their descendants and the approximately 30 acres which survives around them from a once vastly larger plantation are significant in the history of the town of Reidsville and the state of North Carolina. The development of the property from an original 300-acre tract to a substantial plantation of more than 1600 acres, with additional lands owned in the county totaling another 2400 acres, and its eventual diminution to the present configuration reflect the development of a family and of a town over a period of nearly one hundred and fifty years.

Robert Payne Richardson, Sr., was a wealthy planter, a prosperous merchant, and an early tobacco manufacturer, whose son of the same name continued in the tobacco industry, increasing the family's prosperity and influence. The three houses built by father and son reflect this growing affluence, with each house larger and more opulent than the last. Belmont, built in 1912, is one of the most resplendent Neo-Classical Revival houses in the state. However, its current condition mirrors a decline in the family's and town's fortunes, as farming became less and less profitable, the family became land poor, and the town's basic dependence on one industry lead to economic stagnation. Fortunately, the houses remain relatively intact, and numerous domestic and farm outbuildings survive. Together with the remaining acreage and its landscaping and the possible remains of other buildings which do not survive, they provide an important source of information about a family and a way of life through much of the nineteenth century and the first three or four decades of the twentieth century.

The first of the three main houses was probably built in the early 1840s by Robert Payne Richardson, either just before or shortly after his September 1842 purchase of a 307-acre tract of land on the head waters of Little Troublesome Creek from Nathan Wright, whose daughter, Elizabeth, Richardson had married the previous June.<sup>2</sup> The tract was located about one-and-a-half miles southwest of the tiny crossroads community which was to become the town of Reidsville. Through deed records, the tract can be traced to post-Revolutionary War land grants from the state of North Carolina to John Haines (also spelled Haynes) and Patrick Wardlow, prior to the 1785 formation of Rockingham County out of the northern section of Guilford County.<sup>3</sup>

Robert Payne Richardson Sr., was born in Caswell County on 20 December 1820,

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

See continuation sheets for Multiple Resource

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 30

UTM REFERENCES

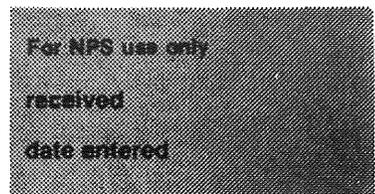
A	1,7	61,7	8,00	4,0	2,2	3,9,0	B	1,7	61,8	4,1,0	4,0	2,2	8,6,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING
c	1,7	61,8	5,6,5	4,0	2,2	5,5,0	D	1,7	61,8	1,4,0	4,0	2,2	1,2,0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The 30-acre property being nominated consists of the three tracts of land surviving from the Richardson plantation which are directly associated with the historic buildings. The boundaries are indicated on the attached sketch map. The buildings are not to scale.

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a son of James and Anne Payne (Ware) Richardson.<sup>4</sup> In June 1842, he married Elizabeth Wright (1820-1848), the daughter of Nathan and Sarah Wright of Rockingham County.<sup>5</sup> To this marriage were born three daughters--Sallie Anne,<sup>6</sup> (ca. 1844-1869), Mary Elizabeth (1845-1914), and Margaret Isabella (1847-1911).<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth Wright Richardson died in July 1848, and in December 1850, the widower married Mary E. Watlington (1827-1903) of Caswell County, a daughter of James and Jane (Scott) Watlington. They had four children--Robert Payne, Jr. (1855-1922), Anna J. (1859-1929), Edmund E. (1861-ca. 1935), and Marion Scott (1864-1906).<sup>7</sup> Family tradition holds that the second house was built about 1860, a date which would be in keeping with its architectural styling and with a need for a larger house to shelter the growing Richardson family.

For some years, Richardson apparently devoted his energies to agricultural pursuits, accumulating a sizeable plantation. By 1860, he had made several additional land purchases, so that he owned in excess of 1600 contiguous acres, of which approximately 400 acres were in cultivation. The 1860 census recorded a cash value for the Richardson plantation of \$14,000. As an adjunct to his plantation, Richardson owned a steam saw mill employing three adult males, which continued in operation until at least 1880, by which time he also owned a flour and grist mill.

In addition to the usual crops and livestock necessary to sustain a farm operation of this size, as well as a growing family, (wheat, corn, oats, peas and beans, potatoes, work animals, milk cows, swine,<sup>9</sup> poultry, sheep, etc.), Richardson produced, in 1860, 32,000 pounds of tobacco.<sup>9</sup> Until the Richardson family ceased its farming operations in the early<sup>10</sup> 1970s, tobacco continued to be the principal crop produced on the plantation.

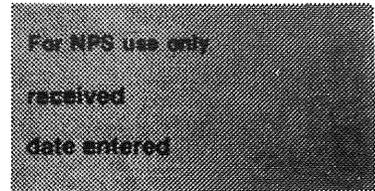
At the time of the 1860 census, Richardson owned 49 slaves out right and controlled another 17 as guardian of his three minor daughters who had been given and willed these slaves by their Wright grandparents.<sup>11</sup> This total of nearly 70 slaves and more than 1600 acres made Richardson a substantial plantation owner and a wealthy man by mid-nineteenth century standards in the state. Census records indicate that only a handful of Rockingham County planters owned more than 100 slaves, and they were members of the extremely wealthy Broadnax family. Richardson was typical of the larger number of substantial planters owning between 40 and 75 slaves, who still remained a minority within the general population.<sup>12</sup>

Although confirming documentation is lacking in census records, Richardson apparently opened a store dealing in general merchandise in the town of Reidsville as well as a tobacco manufacturing<sup>13</sup> plant in the late 1860s, as indicated in Branson's Business Directory for 1869.<sup>13</sup> Plug and twist tobaccos were processed in Richardson's plant,<sup>14</sup> which by the mid 1880s was located on West Market Street north of Morehead Street.<sup>14</sup> Richardson's wealth continued to increase, as he acquired additional land in and around Reidsville and Rockingham County;<sup>15</sup> by the mid-1880s he owned nearly 3000 acres scattered throughout the county.

Although he retired from his general store and tobacco manufacturing enterprises in 1889, Robert Payne Richardson, Sr., remained active in farming and in

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as well as managing his large real estate holdings until his death in 1909, while continuing to live in the house above Little Troublesome Creek.<sup>16</sup> As recently as the 1900 census, before the death of his wife Mary, the house had also been occupied by his son,<sup>17</sup> Edmund E., a widower, Edmund's two school-age sons, and six black servants.<sup>17</sup> At his death, the following was written of Robert Payne Richardson, Sr.,

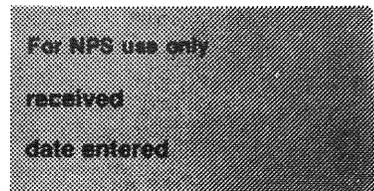
Mr. Richardson has been identified with Reidsville and Rockingham County since and long before Reidsville was a town. Indeed, he was one of the founders of the town, and exercised a great influence in all of its growth and history. He was one of the leading factors in locating the railroad from Danville to Greensboro. He was a large manufacturer, a general merchant and a farmer; and being a man of general public affairs, and large means, and of sterling integrity of character,<sup>18</sup> he exercised a very wide and great influence in his day.

The two houses built by Richardson are typical of their periods of construction. The first is a modest one and one half story, hall and parlor plan, frame structure, exhibiting well-executed pattern-book Greek Revival trim. Apparently built in the early 1840s, it is probably the oldest house standing within the city limits of present-day Reidsville. It is fairly certain that this house originally stood some 500 feet northeast of its present location, on the site now occupied by Belmont, the house built in 1912 for his son Robert Payne Richardson, Jr.<sup>19</sup> The site was well-chosen, as it affords a commanding view of the surrounding countryside over a naturally terraced lawn sloping down to Richardson Drive (formerly the Monroeton Road, now U. S. 158, which runs between Reidsville and Winston-Salem).

The handsome decorative cast and wrought iron porch treatment which now graces the facade of the ca. 1842<sup>20</sup> house is said originally to have been on the second house built by Richardson. This second house was built onto the first about 1860; they were separated and moved to their present locations (the first some 500 feet to the southwest and the second approximately 750 to the northeast) in 1911 or 1912 when Robert Payne Richardson, Jr., was preparing to construct Belmont. The second house is transitional in character, with features of both the Greek Revival and the Italianate styles of architecture. A similar house in Reidsville is the ca. 1868 home of Mortimer Oaks.<sup>21</sup> The second Richardson house now has a full-facade, one-story, classically-derived porch, apparently added early in the twentieth century when the house was moved to its present location. But flush horizontal siding extending approximately four feet on either side of the main entrance suggests that the width of the original porch was much smaller than that which currently spans the facade, a size not unlike the iron porch now on the first house. No other porch treatment of this type survives in Reidsville, and it has not been possible to determine the origin of the ironwork. However, Richardson was probably familiar with similar ironwork on substantial residences in nearby Danville, Virginia, also a major tobacco warehouse and manufacturing center, as well as in the port city of Wilmington, North Carolina and in New Orleans, Louisiana, where his brother, Edmund Richardson, owned property.<sup>22</sup>

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The use of Italianate details in the ornamentation of this house anticipated the immense popularity of the Italianate style for the substantial residences of many prominent Reidsville citizens in the 25 years following the Civil War. The list includes the ca. 1868 brick home of William Lindsey, those built in the 1870s for Robert T. Williams, James T. Whitsett and John A. Roach, and the ca. 1881 Governor David Settle Reid House, as well as the homes of Richardson's sons-in-law, Colonel A. J. Boyd and Archibald<sup>23</sup> Walters, most of which are located in a five-block stretch of South Main Street.

Robert Payne Richardson, Jr., was born on 28 March 1855 and was educated locally, attending the Rock House Academy in nearby Wentworth, according to published biographies.<sup>24</sup> He later studied at Melville ". . . under the renowned teacher of his day, Dr. Alexander Wilson . . ." and in 1872 was a student at the Bingham School in Orange County. In the following year, at the age of eighteen, he began working as a clerk in his father's general store, and arrangement which apparently was unsuited to his temperament. It is said that ". . . he withdrew from this mercantile association, and spent a short time in the South in connection with his father's tobacco business."<sup>25</sup> Although the location of these activities is not known, it may be that he was visiting his uncle in Louisiana.

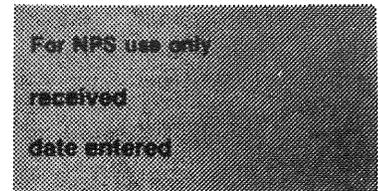
In any event, Richardson, Jr., was in Reidsville in 1875, when<sup>26</sup> he and his parents were among the founding members of the Presbyterian church. And he had returned permanently by October 1877 when he married Anna E. Watt, (1853-1882), a daughter of prominent Rockingham County<sup>27</sup> farmer W. Pinckney Watt and his wife Sarah (Dillard) Watt, a Virginia native. They had one son, Pinckney Watt Richardson, (1881-1958), and Anna Richardson died in March 1882.<sup>28</sup> Ten years later, Richardson married Anna's younger sister Margaret Montgomery Watt (1867-1925), by whom he had three children, Robert Payne III (1897-1967), Margaret Elizabeth (b. 1902), and Sarah Dillard, the last named of whom died in childhood prior to 1900.<sup>29</sup> During much of the period between his first marriage and the death of his father in 1909, Robert Payne Richardson, Jr., and his growing family lived in the town of Reidsville<sup>30</sup>, at least part of the time with his widowed mother-in-law, Sarah Watt.

Also in 1877, Robert Payne Richardson, Jr., is said to have entered the tobacco manufacturing industry separately from his father's concern. Operating for a number of years as Richardson, Denny and Company, the younger Richardson began manufacturing smoking tobacco using the brand name "Old North State,"<sup>31</sup> which had been originated and marketed by his father beginning in 1873. Later operating under the name of Robert Payne Richardson, Jr., and Company, the factory was first located at the corner of Hall and Harris streets to the east of East Market Street. By 1890, Richardson had built a large new plant on East Market Street between Hall and Morehead streets. The handsome brick building with its six-story clock tower<sup>32</sup> was a landmark of Reidsville's skyline until it was destroyed by fire around 1920.

Richardson's Old North State brand smoking tobacco enjoyed such popularity in the region that other local manufacturers were encouraged to begin making

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smoking tobacco, so that by <sup>33</sup>1900 Reidsville was surpassed only by Durham in total production of this article. After the majority of Reidsville tobacco manufacturing plants were acquired by the American Tobacco Company in the first decade of the twentieth century, the Richardson company was one of a handful of small tobacco companies remaining in operation in the town, until it was sold to the Brown and Williamson Tobacco Company of Winston-Salem, in 1926 by Robert Payne Richardson III, four years after his father's death. <sup>34</sup> Robert Payne Richardson, Jr., was a ruling elder of the Reidsville Presbyterian Church and a member of its building committee, and his funeral in 1922, <sup>35</sup> was the first service to be held in the church's still-incomplete new facility.

In 1912, Robert Payne Richardson, Jr., undertook construction of a magnificent new residence on the outskirts of Reidsville on the site then occupied by the two houses built by his father in the mid-19th century. This was at a time when Richardson's prosperity as a tobacco manufacturer was at its peak; but it was also the time when the American Tobacco Company was beginning its expansion into Reidsville. In one front-page article dated 9 February 1912, the Reidsville Review touted the construction of ". . . the mammoth new factory building of the American Tobacco Company. <sup>36</sup> In the same article, it was stated that,

Mr. R. P. Richardson's handsome suburban home when completed will be one of the finest in this part of the country. Mr. Richardson, we understand, has made his plans to eat his next Thanksgiving dinner in the new home. The building will have every convenience and will contain about twenty rooms. The site is ideal, <sup>37</sup> lying on a very high elevation and presenting a magnificent view.

Unfortunately, it has been possible to identify an architect for the house.

Belmont, as Richardson's house was known, is a monumental example of the Neo-Classical Revival style of residential architecture, the hallmark of prosperity in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Several other fine examples of the style exist in Reidsville, including Melrose, the handsome 1909 residence of Hugh Reid Scott, and that of building contractor George Barber, who is traditionally credited with the construction of the Richardson house. <sup>38</sup> In addition, a number of substantial Italianate houses built in the third and fourth quarters of the 19th century were updated in the Neo-Classical Revival and Colonial Revival styles, such as the William Lindsey, Robert Williams, James T. Whitsett and John A. Roach houses on South Main Street. <sup>39</sup> But clearly, the most ambitious of the classically-derived houses built or remodeled in the first two decades of the twentieth century is Belmont, whose size alone sets it apart from the others. Futhermore, its sumptuous exterior and interior details, as well as its magnificent site, combine to make it one of North Carolina's finest examples of the style. <sup>40</sup>

Robert Payne Richardson III was born 12 January 1897 and attended public schools in Reidsville, as well as the Bingham Preparatory School in Asheville. He graduated from Davidson College in 1918 and served in the U. S. Marine Corps

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in the closing months of World War I. Following his discharge, he returned to Reidsville and joined his father in the tobacco manufacturing business. He remained with the company after his father's death in 1922 until 1927, one year after he sold the firm to Brown and Williamson Tobacco Company of Winston-Salem. 4

In 1922, Richardson became a director of the Nu-Shine Company, manufacturers of shoe polish, which had been founded in 1919. He became the company's president in 1927, a position he maintained until 1938 when the company merged with American Products Company. In addition to his work in industry, Richardson owned numerous farms in Rockingham County and in 1945 was appointed by Governor William Cherry to the North Carolina State Hospital Board of Mental Health, serving as its vice-chairman until his death in 1967. 42 At the time of his death, he headed a holding company under the name of R. P. Richardson Associates, an umbrella company for the various family enterprises, including the operation of the farm at Belmont. 43

In 1921, Robert Payne Richardson III married Lucy Irvin (1898-1981), daughter of George Lee and Jane Scales (Galloway) Irvin. They had three children-- Jane Galloway Richardson (b. 1924), Robert Payne Richardson IV (b. 1927), and George Irvin Richardson (b. 1929). 44 These children were reared at Belmont, which the family occupied after the death of Robert Payne Richardson, Jr. Also living in the house for many years was Marion R. Watt, one of the seven children orphaned by the deaths, prior to 1910, of Marion Richardson Watt and her husband, William P. Watt. 45

It is surprising that an experienced businessman such as Robert Payne Richardson Sr., who had lived to the advanced age of eighty-eight, would die without living a will to dispose of his property. However, Richardson did die intestate, leaving debts totalling \$27,000, while the value of his personal estate was estimated at only \$2,100. His son-in-law, E. M. Redd (husband of Anna Richardson Redd and a retired businessman), was appointed administrator of the estate. Redd quickly petitioned the Superior Court to be allowed to sell certain tracts of land owned by Richardson, comprising more than 2500 acres scattered around Rockingham County, as well as 14 lots in and around the town of Reidsville, in order to settle Richardson's debts. 46 Enough of the tracts were sold to satisfy these debts, with additional monies realized from the sale divided among the heirs, which included his surviving children and the children of those who were deceased, including Boyd and Watt grandchildren. Robert Payne Richardson, Jr., a principal creditor of the estate, purchased a number of the tracts, including that on which his father's houses stood, as well as most of his father's personal property, which also was auctioned. 47

Robert Payne Richardson, Jr., died in 1922, and, after cash bequests to his son P. Watt Richardson and the latter's wife and children, the residue of his estate, including the Belmont property, passed to his wife, Margaret. 48 Following Margaret's death in 1925, the real estate was divided among Richardson's children, P. Watt Richardson, R. P. Richardson III, and Margaret Richardson, and a cousin Marion R. Watt, who was living with the family. R. P. Richardson III and Margaret

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Richardson received a 3/7 undivided interest each and M. R. Watt, a 1/7 undivided interest in the 667-acre tract on which the three houses stood.

Since the death of Robert Payne Richardson, Sr., in 1909 and the move, a short time later, of the two sections of his house to their present locations, the ca. 1842 house has been occupied either by servants working at Belmont or by tenants. For the last approximately twenty years, it has been leased by Fletcher Carter, a tobacco farmer who retired several years ago. The later house is believed to have been occupied until the mid 1930s successively by an employee of Duke Power Company (whose name appears to have been McCory or McRorie), by prominent Reidsville attorney P. W. Glidewell, and by family member Ed Richardson, although records have not been found to support this information.

In 1937, the family sold a five-acre tract containing the second house, known as North Belmont, to Kate H. Hobgood and her husband Frank P. Hobgood. Mrs. Hobgood (ca. 1886-1963), prior to her 1932 marriage to Hobgood, was the widow of John N. Watt, a brother of the two wives of Robert Payne Richardson, Jr. Hobgood (1872-1950), a native of Oxford in Granville County, was an attorney who practiced in Greensboro for many years. He served in the North Carolina Senate from 1911 to 1915, was a special assistant to the U. S. Attorney General dealing with litigation regarding oil lands in Wyoming and California from 1915 to 1917, and was president of the board of trustees of Palmer Memorial Institute in Guilford County. Four years after her husband's death, Mrs. Hobgood sold North Belmont to Z. Griff Smith, owner of Z. Griff Smith Lumber Company. The Smiths sold the property in 1983 to John and Jan Paschal.

In 1951, Margaret R. Womack and her husband Nathan A. Womack of Chapel Hill and M. R. Watt of Reidsville deeded to Lucy I. Richardson and Robert Payne Richardson III "The dwelling southwest of the corporate limits of the city of Reidsville known as 'BELMONT,' together with a 14 acres tract of land on which the dwelling is located." Robert Payne Richardson III died in 1967, willing Belmont and the 14-acre tract to his widow Lucy. Mrs. Richardson and her two children who did not reside in Reidsville--Robert P. Richardson IV and Jane Richardson Vieth--deeded their interests to Belmont to the third child George Irvin Richardson, a Reidsville physician. The remainder of the estate, now consisting of approximately eleven acres and including the site on which the first house stands, is owned jointly by the children of Robert Payne Richardson III.

After her husband's death in 1967, Lucy I Richardson lived at Belmont for about one year. In 1968, a small brick ranch-style house was built for her about 100 yards northeast of Belmont. At that time, Dr. George Irvin Richardson moved with his young family to Belmont, where they remained until his mother's death in 1981, when they moved to the brick house. This last house joined two frame tenant houses, several log tobacco barns, a frame pack house, a large stable, garages, and miscellaneous outbuildings in forming a large complex illustrating the development of a property over a period of nearly 130 years. Remains of buildings and structures no longer standing, location of wells and trash pits, and the layout of the complex and its landscaping have potential for contributing to our un-

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derstanding of this development.

Since the mid 1920s, much of the acreage associated with the Robert Payne Richardson Houses has been sold off by the family, part of which is now the Belmont residential subdivision.<sup>60</sup> The property being nominated consists of approximately 30 acres in three tracts--eleven acres on which the ca. 1842 house stands, the five-acre tract associated with North Belmont, the ca. 1860 house, and the 14-acre Belmont tract. Belmont itself is unoccupied now and is beginning to show the signs of deterioration which are typical of vacant houses. Most of the various domestic and farm outbuildings are no longer in use, and some are in a state of collapse. The first house has been occupied by tenants for many years and has seen numerous changes, including construction of a new foundation and chimneys, presumably when it was moved to its present location, the addition of rooms at the rear, and the laying of concrete porch floors. The second house, although beautifully maintained, has also been altered to some degree, in part as a result of the move from the original site; a variety of kitchen and bathroom additions and modernizations have also taken place. But the complex as a whole still attests to the wealth and position of the Richardson family in the life of Reidsville for nearly one hundred and fifty years. Because of its significance as one of the premier examples of Neo-Classical Revival style residential architecture in the state, Belmont was included on a tour of Reidsville held on 14 April 1984 by the North Carolina Chapter, Victorian Society of America.

Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Telephone interview with Dr. George Irvin Richardson, Reidsville, North Carolina, 4 February 1986 (hereinafter cited as Richardson interview).

<sup>2</sup> Rockingham County Register of Deeds (hereinafter cited as RCRD), deed book 2N, p. 112.

<sup>3</sup> Guilford County Register of Deeds, deed book 2, p. 248 and deed book 3, p. 132; RCRD, deed book D, p. 33, deed book D, pp. 144 and 145, deed book Q, p. 421 and deed book W, p. 18; and Lindley S. Butler, Rockingham County: A Brief History (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, 1982), p. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Samuel A'Court Ashe, A Biographical History of North Carolina from Colonial Times to the Present, v. II (Greensboro: Charles L. Van Noppen, 1905), p. 372.

<sup>5</sup> Marriage Bonds, North Carolina State Archives, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina; and Reidsville historic architectural survey files, Survey and Planning Branch, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina (hereinafter cited as Reidsville Survey Files), Wright-Richardson Cemetery file.

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<sup>6</sup> Ashe, A Biographical History, p. 376; RCRD, Marriage Register and Index to Vital Statistics-Deaths; and United States Census, 1850, population schedule.

<sup>7</sup> U. S. Census, 1850, 1870, and 1880, population schedules; RCRD, Marriage Register and Index to Vital Statistics-Deaths; and Rockingham County, Clerk of Superior Court, Orders and Decrees, Book C, p. 419.

<sup>8</sup> U. S. Census, 1860, agriculture, manufacturing and slave schedules; and RCRD, deed book 2S, p. 250 and index to deeds.

<sup>9</sup> U. S. Census, 1860, agriculture schedule.

<sup>10</sup> Richardson interview.

<sup>11</sup> U. S. Census, 1860, slave schedule; RCRD, deed book 2Q, p. 237; and Rockingham County, Clerk of Superior Court, Will Book C, pp. 104 and 173.

<sup>12</sup> U. S. Census, 1850 and 1860, slave schedules.

<sup>13</sup> Levi Branson, ed., Branson's Business Directory (Raleigh: Levi Branson Publishing Co., 1969), p. 138.

<sup>14</sup> Sanborn Insurance Company maps, Reidsville series.

<sup>15</sup> Charles Emerson, North Carolina Tobacco Belt Directory (Greensboro: Charles Emerson, Publisher & Compiler, 1886), p. 538.

<sup>16</sup> The (Reidsville, N.C.) Weekly Review, 27 February 1889, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> U. S. Census, 1900, population schedule.

<sup>18</sup> Reidsville (N. C.) Review, 19 January 1909, p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> Reidsville Survey Files.

<sup>20</sup> Reidsville Survey Files.

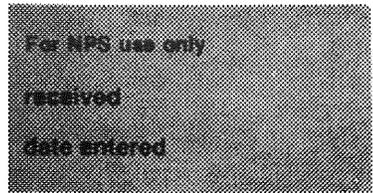
<sup>21</sup> Laura A. W. Phillips, Reidsville, North Carolina: An Inventory of Historic & Architectural Resources (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History and Reidsville Historic Properties Commission, 1981), pp. 84 and 144; and Richardson interview.

<sup>22</sup> Ashe, A Biographical History, p. 375.

<sup>23</sup> Phillips, Reidsville . . . Resources, pp. 70-81 and 87; and RCRD, Marriage Register.

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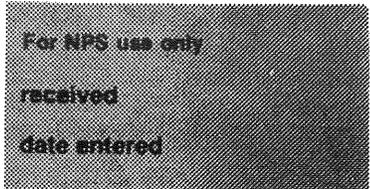


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- <sup>24</sup> Ashe, A Biographical History, pp. 376-377; and North Carolina, the Old North State and the New, vol. III (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1941), p. 447.
- <sup>25</sup> Ashe, A Biographical History, p. 377.
- <sup>26</sup> Marion Strange Huske, The Centennial History of First Presbyterian Church (Reidsville: n.p., 1975), p. 7.
- <sup>27</sup> RCRD, Marriage Register and Death Certificates, book 1, number 72.
- <sup>28</sup> RCRD, Death Certificates, book 51, number 180; and Ashe, A Biographical History, p. 376.
- <sup>29</sup> RCRD, Marriage Register; Ashe, A Biographical History, p. 376; and U. S. Census, 1900, population schedules.
- <sup>30</sup> U. S. Census, 1880 and 1900, population schedules.
- <sup>31</sup> Ashe, A Biographical History, p. 377; and Branson's Business Directory, 1884, p. 573.
- <sup>32</sup> Sanborn Insurance Company maps, Reidsville series.
- <sup>33</sup> Butler, Rockingham County, p. 60.
- <sup>34</sup> North Carolina, The Old North State and the New, v. III (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1941), p. 448 (copy in Reidsville Survey Files); Butler, Rockingham County, pp. 77-78; and RCRD, deed book 240, p. 113.
- <sup>35</sup> Huske, Centennial History, p. 12.
- <sup>36</sup> "Building Boom Follows Boom of New Era for Some of Our Enterprises," Reidsville Review, 13 February 1912, p. 1.
- <sup>37</sup> "Building Boom," Reidsville Review.
- <sup>38</sup> Phillips, Reidsville . . . Resources, pp. 80, 90 and 92.
- <sup>39</sup> Phillips, Reidsville . . . Resources, pp. 70 and 73-75.
- <sup>40</sup> Davyd Foard Hood to Dr. G. Irvin Richardson, 14 March and 20 April 1984.
- <sup>41</sup> North Carolina, The Old North State, p. 447.
- <sup>42</sup> North Carolina, The Old North State, p. 447; and Huske, A Centennial History, p. 16.

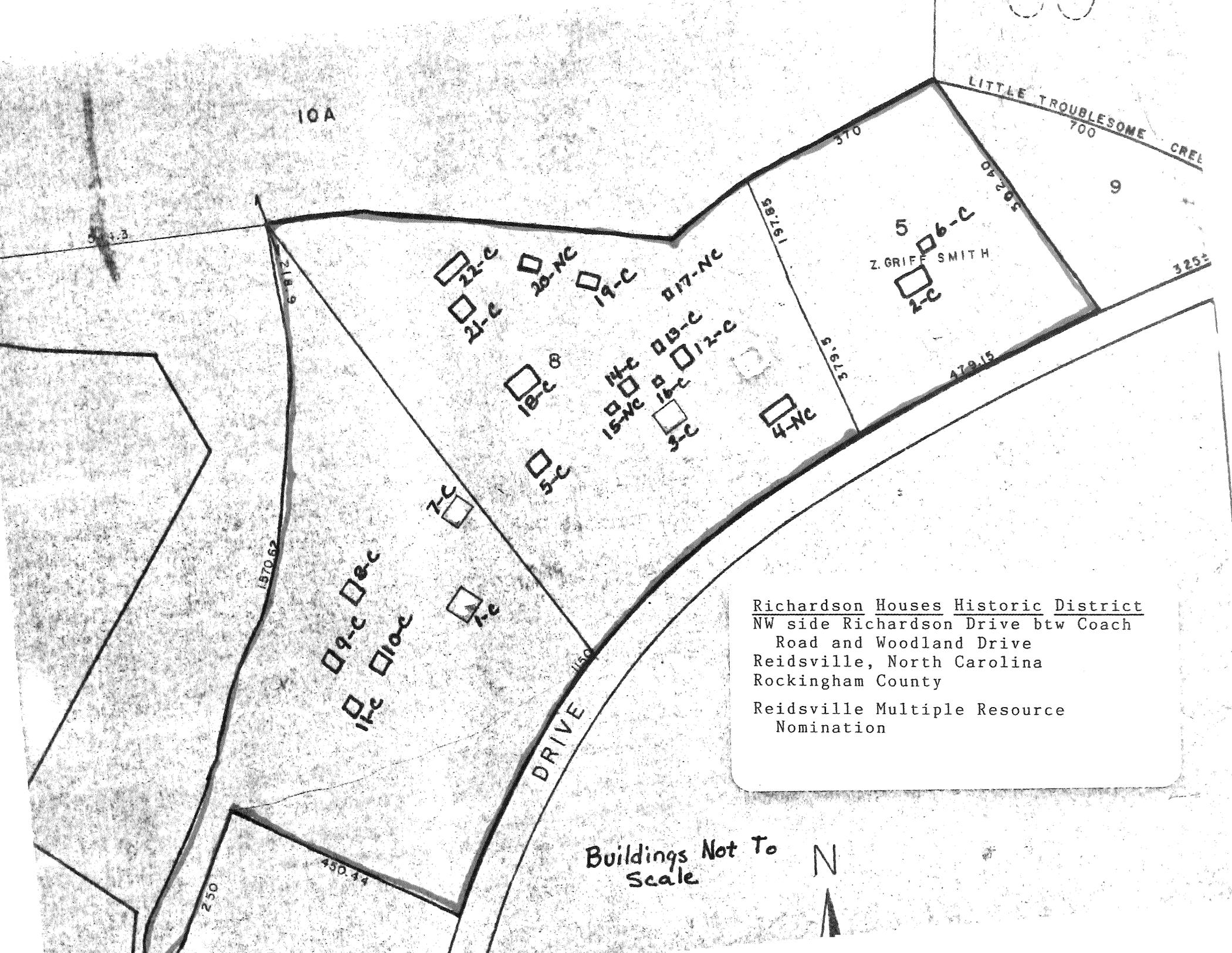
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- <sup>43</sup> Greensboro (N. C.) Daily News, 18 February 1967; and Richardson interview.
- <sup>44</sup> North Carolina, The Old North State, p. 448; and RCRD, Index to Vital Statistics—Births and Deaths.
- <sup>45</sup> Richardson interview.
- <sup>46</sup> Rockingham County Clerk of Superior Court, Orders and Decrees, book C, pp. 734 ff; and U. S. Census, 1900, population schedule.
- <sup>47</sup> Rockingham County Clerk of Superior Court, Record of Accounts, vol. E, pp. 281, 294 and 349.
- <sup>48</sup> Rockingham County, Clerk of Superior Court, Will Book G, p. 206.
- <sup>49</sup> RCRD, Index to Vital Statistics—Deaths; RCRD, deed book 281, pp. 288-289; and Richardson interview.
- <sup>50</sup> Richardson interview.
- <sup>51</sup> RCRD, deed book 299, p. 108 an deed book 300, p. 576.
- <sup>52</sup> RCRD, Marriage Register and Death Certificates, book 13, number 373.
- <sup>53</sup> Who Was Who in America with World Notables, vol. V, 1969-1973 (Chicago: Marquis Who's Who, Inc., 1973), p. 338.
- <sup>54</sup> RCRD, deed book 463, p. 627; and Reidsville city directories.
- <sup>55</sup> RCRD, deed book 751, p. 858; and Reidsville city directories.
- <sup>56</sup> RCRD, deed book 421, p. 219.
- <sup>57</sup> Rockingham County, Clerk of Superior Court, Will Book P, p. 308; and RCRD, deed book 475, p. 161.
- <sup>58</sup> Richardson interview.
- <sup>59</sup> Richardson interview.
- <sup>60</sup> Richardson interview.



Richardson Houses Historic District  
 NW side Richardson Drive btw Coach  
 Road and Woodland Drive  
 Reidsville, North Carolina  
 Rockingham County  
 Reidsville Multiple Resource  
 Nomination

Buildings Not To  
Scale



