ORANGE COUNTY INVENTORY

During the period of September 1976 to April 1977 a survey of Orange County was conducted by two art history students, Margaret Davis and Woods Garland. The completed survey consisted of 106 entries including houses, schools, churches, mills, commercial structures, and cemeteries. The survey excluded Hillsborough, Carrboro, and Chapel Hill proper, as each has had its own inventory compiled, and has its own historic district. Therefore the survey includes mainly rural structures, which also play an important role in the architectural history of Orange County.

The county was formed in 1752 and at that time it included Chatham, Caswell, Person, and Alamance counties, and portions of several others. It's population was made up mostly of farmers or yeomen, according to Hugh Lefler, but some attention was paid to industry such as saw mills and grist mills. Most of the industry was lost to Alamance County, however, when it was created in 1849. The county hosts a political and cultural center, Hillsborough, its historic county seat. Orange County includes the site of the first state university, dating from 1795, in Chapel Hill. Thus the county has been diversified from its birth and remains so today. It is approximately one third of its original size according to Ruth Blackwelder, and 70.3 % of its land is devoted to farming and pastureland, i.e. to rural usage. Therefore a survey of rural Orange County is important since a great percentage of the county's architecture is non-urban.

The tools of our Orange County survey were varied. Books on architecture of the South, architectural styles, and the history of Orange County were consulted and are listed in the bibliography. The 1891 Tate Map of Orange County was especially helpful. Not only did it aid in the location of historical structures, but it also helped make more specific dating possible. Two Orange County residents are in the process of conducting a similar survey. Through consultation with Dr. Blake of Hillsborough and Mrs. Alfred Engstrom of Chapel Hill, we were able to locate noteworthy structures that we might not have been able to find otherwise. The two local historians also provided histories for many of the buildings. And, to make the survey more complete, we examined the existing files on Orange County and incorporated buildings that had previously been surveyed into our inventory.

Every road of the county was combed in search of historic structures. Often the significance of the building was not immediately evident and discriminatory judgements had to be made. Always conscious of the site, especially the existence of old trees and outbuildings, we at first noted the shape and proportions of the building: the boxier the better. The size and shape of the chimneys was an important factor. Moving in for a closer inspection, we noted such features as the roof's position, the size and placement of the windows, the age of the window glass, and such details as the type of hardware used. These and other features helped in determination of styles and approximate dates.

The 106 structures recorded have been divided into twelve catagories according to their style of usage. Listed chronologically the styles represented in our survey of rural Orange County are; Georgian 11%, Federal 5%, Greek Revival 13%, Log 14%, "Triple-A" 12%, Plain 19th Century 24%, and Victorian 6%. Some structures come between major periods and are seen as transitional. Other catagories in our completed inventory are: churches 6%, commercial structures 6%, mills 2%, schools 4%, and cemeteries 5%.

Comprising 11% of the survey, Georgian is the earliest syle of architecture we found in rural Orange County. The Georgian style of building began in the early 18th century, was supposed to end with the Revolution,

was supplanted in most fashionable urban centers by the end of the century

but continued well into the 19th century in conservative North Carolina. Harold Eberlein has said that Georgian architecture echoed the spirit of the Renaissance; it reflected Renaissance ideals. Georgian has the atmosphere of well-ordered classicism with its symmetry and geometrical proportions. The Georgian mode of expression is also characterized by its heaviness and boldness, but it is not ungraceful. It is a stately expression. A Georgian domestic structure is frequently box-shaped. Raised panels are very characteristic and the bold mantels often have protruding mantel shelves and over-mantels.

Two examples of the Georgian style in rural Orange County are the Joseph C. Allison House and Green Hill. Located near Schley in the northeastern section of the county, the Allison House exemplifies North Carolina's retardataire Georgian style. The present owner says that her grandfather built the house in 1840. Although it is a simple structure and has had a considerable number of alterations, the Allison House has Georgian features. Having a two room plan, the two story dwelling has a very boxy shape. The entrance door has boldly raised panels and a huge box lock. The massive mantel in the main parlor has a protruding mantel shelf.

A much grander display of the Georgian style is found in Green Hill, now located just outside of Hillsborough, moved twelve miles from its original site. Sections of the house date from different eras; the Georgian section was built in 1750. The main room of the older section of the house has Georgian characteristics such as, a heavily molded cornice around the ceiling, a pronounced chair rail with raised paneling in the wainscot below. The Georgian mantel has an over-mantel above. The house has elements of both the Georgian and Federal styles. The later section of Green Hill is in the Federal style.

The Federal style flourished in North Carolina from the 1780's or 90's until approximately 1825. It is distinguished by its lightness and delicacy. Slighter proportions, low relief molding, flat panels, and such types of ornament as the patera, half-patera, and reeding characterize the Federal style. The southeastern section of Green Hill is distinctly Federal. The three-part mantel of the parlor exhibits the patera motif and the reeding which is often found on Hillsborough Federal mantels. Half-paterae are used in the corner blocks of the door frames and the wainscoting has flat panels. Compared to the heavier atmosphere in the older Georgian section, the mood of the Federal parlor in Green Hill is light and airy.

Although Federal structures comprised an extremely small portion of the buildings surveyed, 5%, each had outstanding quality. Mapel Hill, ca. 1820, near Hillsborough, is one such remarkable edifice. The oldest section of the house is the front parlor, which has a large Federal mantel with the Hillsborough reed design. The flat panel Federal doors have old hardware and box locks.

The Greek Revival style was dominant in North Carolina from about 1825 to 1865 and it composed 13% of our survey. It is typified by its bilateral symmetry, such as a wide central hall separarating symmetrical rooms, its new expression of ornamentation in the use of marbelized wood in baseboards, wainscots, and mantels, its symmetrically molded door and window surrounds capped by corner blocks. Greek Revival houses often lack exterior ornament and this was often found to be true in the Orange County survey. Two houses which exemplify Greek Revival qualities are the Thomas Roberts House and the "Stagecoach Stop". The first of these houses has the typical Greek Revival surrounds on both the exterior and the interior, including the symmetrical molding and corner blocks. The marbelized wood treatment on baseboards, mantels, and wainscot are the finest we found in Orange County. The house is symmetrical except for the extensive rear additions. The cornice continues along the gable ends to form pediments,

also adding classical elements. The doors themselves are symmetrical and have two flat panels. Another house of the same mode is the "Stagecoach House" in which symmetry is evident throughout. The house has double chimneys at both gable ends and a double door entrance with sidelights and a transom. It also has symmetrically molded door and window and door surrounds with plain corner blocks. The marbelizing of the wood is missing here, but the wainscot and mantels have symmetrical, flat paneled molding.

The next category to be discussed is that of the log cabin, which we view as more of a construction method than a style per se. The typical 1½ story log cabin is a widespread structure in rural Orange County and is used for barns, smokehouses and dwellings. The popularity of the log cabin probably stems from the immediate access to wooded areas, the ease of construction, and the structural stability provided. Only log dwellings were surveyed and they comprised 14% of the total inventory. They usually had stone chimneys and the logs were joined by housetop or half-dovetail notches. Many of these cabins have now been either covered with weatherboard or shingle siding and are difficult to recognize as old buildings. Examples of this are the Menice Place, the Sykes Log Cabin, and the Blackwood House. Two examples of the dog-trot plan log cabin, which have not been altered, are the Chambers Log House and the log cabins moved from the Bingham School where they were used as sleeping quarters. The Chambers Log House has heavy hand hewn beams with the housetop notch and a large stone chimney at one end. It is 1½ stories, the upper story being a loft. The log cabins from the Bingham School are also typical of this mode of construction. Here however the usual breezeway of the dog-trot plan is blocked by a massive chimney, which supplies a fireplace to each room. Once again the housetop notch is used and the hand hewn logs have hack saw marks still obvious. These log structures are difficult to date due to the fact that they have been constructed in the same fashion throughout the 19th and into the 20th century.

Another type of structure which was seen throughout Orange County and comprises 12% of our survey has been labeled "Triple A". Again this is not a style per se, but more of a method of construction. It is characterized by a false front gable and shingle or bracket designs beneath the cornice and in the gables. It was often an attempt at updating a plain 19th century house, perhaps making it appear more Victorian. These houses, placed in a separate category, can also be seen as proto-Victorian; they usually date from the 1870's to the 1890's. Two examples, the Blue Bonnet Ranch and the Miller House, feature the false front gable. Bach have rear wing additions and the subsequent 'L'-shape is also typical of "Triple A" houses. Both of these structures have exterior chimneys, double door entrances, decorative shingle work in the false gable, and returned eaves. These are all common elements of the "Triple A" houses surveyed in Orange County. Blue Bonnet has an interesting brick inlay design in the neck of its west end chimney and pendant brackets support the cornice. As is often found in the "Triple A" houses surveyed, there is lattice work applied in the false gable. Although these two "Triple A" houses are similar, the Miller House is distinguished by its clipped gable ends, forming bays, rear rather than side chimneys, and a considerably older rear wing with a Georgian mantel. This supports the idea that "Triple A" is an update of existing structures. Although the "Triple A" type only made up 12% of our total inventory, these structures are prevalent throughout all of Orange County and are fairly uniform in their plan structure and applied decoration.

The majority, 24% of the structures surveyed in rural Orange County have been classified as plain 19th century. These houses are ubiquitous, and those

surveyed only represent a sampling of the total number of the plain 19th century buildings in the county. Because ornamentation or other stylistic features were so slight or even nonexistent, these structures could not safely be attributed to a certain style. There were various reasons for surveying these houses. Some had significant single features such as unusual chimneys. For example, the Strayhorn House near Hillsborough is a plain 1½ story frame structure that has been vastly altered, but it has a massive stone chimney, perhaps the largest in rural Orange County. The Old Stanford House near White Cross, overgrown and in an extremely dilapidated condition, also has an interesting chimney. It is double-shouldered, constructed of stone from the ground level to above the first shoulder, and of brick in the upper portion. Other of the plain 19th century buildings surveyed had significant plans, such as the dog-trot plan of the Thomas H. Hughes House near Cedar Grove. We also found it interesting that the Hughes House and several other vacant plain 19th century dwellings in the immediate area once formed a complex of houses that faced a now deserted road. Other plain 19th century structures were surveyed for their historical significance; many were listed on the Tate Map. For example, the plain 1½ story frame N.C.Hester House near Carr has little architectural significance other than its nearly saltbox shape. It was surveyed primarily because it and other Hester residences are on the Tate Map. Most of the plain 19th century houses in Orange County are either 1½ or 2 stories, of frame construction, and have 1 or 2 exterior end chimneys. Frequently they have rear additions. Plain 19th century structures have a dearth of ornament, especially in Orange County.

The Victorian style, predominant in North Carolina from approximately the 1870's to the turn of the century, constitutes 6% of the buildings surveyed in Orange County. Those recorded were chosen as representative samples. A Victorian architectural historian, John Maass, perceives an experimental vitality and a pleasurable fancy in 19th century American Victorian architecture. Even in rural Orange County, Victorian houses are flamboyant and convey the Victorian mood in their decoration. Two examples of the Victorian style in Orange County are the Dr. Murphey House near Carr and the house which straddles the Person County line. The unnamed Victorian house on the northern border of Orange County seems to issue the style humbly into the county. It has such recognizable Victorian traits as, ample proportions, large windows with 2/2 sash, and it has the especially characteristic machine made decoration. This ornament spans the spaces between the front porch posts, forming graceful arches. The Dr. Murphey House is much more elaborately Victorian. It also has the Victorian proportions, window type, and machine made decoration, but it is much more ornate. The 2 story 'L'-shaped house has a 1 story porch encircling it and the roof of the porch is raised over the central entrance. Victorian bric-a-brac is applied extensively to the exterior surfaces. The interior is also characteristically Victorian, especially the mantels which have arcuate construction and mirrors in the over-mantels.

Grouped according to usage instead of style, churches comprise 6% of the inventory. We began our survey including cemeteries with churches. After conferring with Mrs. Engstrom, however, we learned of her thorough survey of all the cemeteries and family burial grounds in Orange County, which will be submitted to Historic Sites upon completion. Therefore, after January, we discontinued our search for cemeteries. Of those we did find, however, two are of noted historical significance: The Old Eno Cemetery, a Presbyterian cemetery with graves from the early 1800's, and the Old New Hope Cemetery, from one of the oldest Scottish Presbyterian settlements with graves dating from the late 1700's.

According to Lefler most of the churches in Orange County are either Presbyterian or Baptist, and we also found this to be true in our inventory. There were some Episcopal churches, such as St. Mary's Parish, established 1759, which will be discussed in this paper, and the Cane Creek area was settled by Quakers. The other church to be discussed here is the Bethlehem Presbyterian Church, organized in 1822. The majority of original churches in Orange County stand on or near their original site, but most of them have been rebuilt within the last 40 or 50 years, and were thus not pertinent to our survey. However the churches mentioned above met the criteria of our survey. St. Mary's was built in 1859 and is a Gothic Revival brick structure laid in Flemish bond. The church has a projecting apse in the rear behind an arched opening. There are nonfunctional butresses along the sides and Gothic arch windows throughout. Although the interiors are rather plain, there is an elegant simplicity about the structure. It is unique in the fact that brick rather than wood is the material used. The Bethlehem Church is a Greek Revival structure of a grander scale than St. Mary's. It is built on a cross-axis plan, and all four gable ends are pedimented. There is a full height portico with pillars across the front and also an enlarged dentil cornice. Again the interiors are fairly simple, but the structure itself is quite beautiful.

Our final caregory consists of several groups of structures which comprised a minor portion of our survey. They are listed according to their function: schools, which made up 4% of the inventory; mills, which made up 2%; and commercial structures, which made up 6%. Schools and private academies for both boys and girls, were found throughout the county. Public education did not take shape until 1839 . Often there were preparatory schools for the university. The most eminent of these was the Bingham School according to Leffler, and it was directed by three generations of educators. This is architecturally the most significant of the schools we surveyed. Among the others surveyed were the Hughes and the Cedar Grove Academies.

The next subdivision of this category is the mills, which are only scantly represented here. As was stated earlier a good deal of the industry of Orange County went to Alamance County when it was formed, and a large number of saw and grist mills are no longer standing. The two we surveyed were both grist mills: Morrow's Mill and Faucette's Mill, located on Cane Creek and The Eno River respectively.

Finally we surveyed a few country stores and two post offices. For the most part these structures are more historically than architecturally significant, although the Jorden Pharmacy is worth mentioning. It is a 1 story board and batten building which dates from the 1850's and recalls the A.J. Downing building style. It is irregular in plan with a hip roof and was featured in a Durham newspaper article in March of 1969.

After having discussed all of the preceding styles and categories, one begins to develop a total picture of the architecture in rural Orange County and certain prevailing trends become evident. Basically Orange County is made up of unpretentious utilitarian farm houses, varying in style. But there is seldomly a radical departure from one style to the next. Styles often meld together, especially during periods of transition. Pure examples of the styles represented were hard to find. Mantels, stairways, window and door surrounds, and moldings are so often plain. Even the more affluent homes, such as the Smith Place, and Miss Maude Faucette's House are not particularly decorative. However, around Hillsborough, the cultural and political center of the county, more embellishments were found. This more well-to-do area had residents who

could afford more decorative elements for their homes. And it is in these houses around Hillsborough, such as Sunnyside and Chatwood, that styles are most clearly represented.

Aside from the general lack of ornamentation, Orange County structures are usually frame, oblong in plan with exterior end chimneys. Brick was rare; only one brick house was surveyed, Little Ayr Mount. This is a beautiful transitional Georgian/Federal house with a 2 story central core and two flanking 1 story wings. There are a variety of plans in Orange County: central hall, two room, hall and parlor, dog-trot, and one room.

Certain areas of the county exhibited specific trends. Towns with schools became architectural centers,such as Cedar Grove, Oaks, Caldwell, and Calvander. For example, the center of the northeast is Caldwell; elsewhere in that area there is little of architectural significance. In the Sands, the northwest corner of the county, Cedar Grove is the architectural center. Towns with schools became cultural and architectural centers throughout the county. This depicts Orange County as an area with a special concern for education throughout its existence. Only a few academies remain and they comprise a small portion of our survey, as do commercial and religious edifices. Domestic architecture is the dominant building type, and therefore is much more characteristic of Orange County architecture.

We would like to conclude with an example of what we consider to be a typical, yet particularly pleasing, rural Orange County domestic structure. The Strowd House, ca.1860, located just outside of Carrboro, is a 2 story frame plain 19th century dwelling, with two exterior end chimneys and a 1 story shed roof porch. The exterior and interior trim is plain, and the spacious interior rooms are organized symmetrically around the central hall. The house is extremely well-kept, and large trees bestow generous shade and enhance the pleasant setting. This historic house, like many others in rural Orange County, is not architecturally startling, yet it is a fine and handsome reminder of Orange past.

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