



## 7. Description - See individual site forms

<b>Condition</b> N/A		<b>Check one</b> N/A	<b>Check one</b> N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

A. General physical description of the natural and man-made character of the area.

The Wilson County Multiple Resource Area consists of all the land within the county boundaries with the exception of the city of Wilson.

#### Location

Wilson County lies in the central part of the coastal plain about thirty miles east of Raleigh, the state capital, about fifty miles south of the Virginia border, and about one hundred miles west of the Atlantic. The county includes approximately three hundred and seventy-three square miles and measures about thirty miles from east to west and twenty miles from north to south.

#### Topography

Geographically Wilson County is a part of the broad coastal plain which covers nearly half the state from the Atlantic to the fall lines of the Roanoke, Tar, Neuse and Cape Fear Rivers. The land in Wilson County varies from quite flat to gently rolling hills in the northwestern sections of the county.

#### Waterways

The principal waterways are Contentnea Creek, Toisnot Swamp, Black Creek and Town Creek, but dozens of small branches and swamps also water the area. None of the principal waterways are navigable, but in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a small segment of Contentnea Creek, about twenty-four miles long, was used to ship farm and forest products by barge from loading areas just north of Stantonsburg (which is located at the south-eastern edge of the county) south to the Neuse River. Although water traffic on Wilson County streams was limited the streams encouraged settlement by providing power for mills and their abundant fish served to supplement the diet of the area's population.

#### Roads

The early roads of the Wilson County area were limited in number and quality. During the second half of the eighteenth century the stagecoach road from Raleigh to Tarboro, which passed through what is now the city of Wilson and extended out what is now Rt. 42 was of vital importance. Another road joined Tarboro to the Johnston County Court House and Cross Creek (now Fayetteville). This road went through Upper Town Creek and near Elm City before crossing Contentnea Creek five miles west of the present city of Wilson. The Wilmington to Tarboro road also entered Wilson County, crossing Contentnea Creek at Peacock's (later Ruffin's) Bridge and passing through Stantonsburg and Saratoga. The "Quaker Road" crossed Black Creek Township (near the Quaker settlements to the south) and proceeded north through Old Fields Township to the Nash-Johnston County line. The road system gradually expanded and altered and by 1925 three state highways served the county, only one of which was completely paved. Today two

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major highways, Rt. 301 and I-95 bisect the county from north to south and Rt. 264 runs from east to west.

The railroad system which began in the 1830s in North Carolina opened up the Wilson County area for development when the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad was completed in 1840. The rail line bisected the county from north to south and three depots were established along the tracks in the area which later became Wilson County. In the 1880s a branch line was added leading from Wilson to the South Carolina border, and in 1907 the Norfolk and Southern Railroad was completed running the width of the county from the northwest to the southeast and crossing the Atlantic Coast Line (formerly the Wilmington and Weldon) at the city of Wilson.

#### Churches

The country church has traditionally been a focal point of rural life in Wilson County, and remains an important factor today. The 1925 soil map of Wilson County shows numerous churches, usually located at the small crossroad communities along with a house or two and a country store. The religious life of the Wilson County area was dominated by the Primitive Baptist sect until the time of the Civil War, after which Missionary and Free Will Baptists, Methodists and other denominations began to increase in number. In 1872 there were fourteen rural churches, while in 1890 this number had grown to twenty-five. Today the number of congregations continues to increase, and no accurate figure for the number of rural churches is known.

#### Rural Landscape

Historically Wilson County has been predominately a rural area. The landscape of the county still reflects this heritage. There are far more small crossroad settlements of the type described above under churches than there are incorporated towns. Wilson is a county of scattered farmhouses, and farming is still the basis of its economy. The density of construction of the county has increased in recent years as highway business uses have expanded and brick ranch houses singly or in the form of subdivisions have proliferated. Wilson County ranks fourth in the state in terms of cleared land in comparison to size, so much of the land is under cultivation. Pine and deciduous trees make up the remaining woodland. According to the 1980 U. S. census the total population of Wilson County is 63,123, including the city of Wilson, amounting to 169.25 persons per square mile over all or 79.74 persons per square mile in the rural areas.

#### Small Towns

Only six whole incorporated towns are located within the county limits and these towns, along with the city of Wilson, make up the total urban population of the county. The towns range in population from 192 (Sims) to 4,963 (Elm City). Most all of the towns, with the exception of Sims

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and Saratoga are growing rapidly with the addition of new suburban development and sometimes new commercial enterprises. The make-up of these Wilson County towns is typical of other small towns in North Carolina. Generally a dense, low-rise commercial core is surrounded by residential areas featuring for the most part frame dwellings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In Elm City and Lucama the massive mature trees add much to the cohesiveness of the streetscape and the charm of the residential neighborhoods. No row housing is used and most houses have fairly deep setbacks and good sized yards. Multiple family housing is minimal and is generally limited to newer duplexes or large old houses that have been converted into apartments.

**Predominant Types of Resources**

Wilson County's historic resources share much with those of North Carolina as a whole, especially the eastern section. The predominant historic structure is the farmhouse because of the rural character of the county. These farmhouses range in date from late eighteenth century to early twentieth century. The later buildings included in this nomination are mainly found in districts; Elm City and Lucama, both small towns, were established in the late nineteenth century because of improved industrial and commercial prospects following Reconstruction. Most of the substantial plantation houses date from the antebellum period, but a number of significant structures were also built after the Civil War, notably around the turn-of-the-century when tobacco began to be grown in increasing quantity throughout the county.

**B. Description of Resource Area in Periods of Significance**

Wilson County's development can be divided into roughly five different periods; the Frontier Period, circa 1740-1787, the Post Revolutionary Period, circa 1787-1840, the Railroad Period, circa 1840-1860, the Civil War/Reconstruction Period, 1860-1875, and the Tobacco Period, circa 1875-1960. Developments in each period reflect broadly trends across the state.

During the Frontier Period (ca. 1740-1787) the county's first white settlers settled in what is now Wilson County. They found the Wilson County area to be a region of piney forests divided by many small streams. The naval stores industry and agricultural pursuits co-existed and the land was gradually cleared and planted as more settlers came to the area. The survey of Wilson County discovered no buildings that can be firmly documented as coming from this period.

During the Post-Revolutionary Period (ca. 1787-1840) the area continued to grow in much the same manner as during the Frontier Period, but the area suffered from a lack of navigable waterways and good roads. Mills were built along the waterways and as settlement increased so did pressures to offer better services to the residents of the area. In the latter part of this period a state-wide out-migration drew off many of

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the area's population and decreased its potential for growth.

During the Railroad Period (ca. 1840-1860) the area's first railroad, the Wilmington and Weldon, brought new prosperity as well as better access to the area, ushering in a time of economic gains for the entire state. Agriculture became more profitable because of the easier access to markets and cheaper freight rates and the economy shifted away from subsistence farming. The town of Wilson was incorporated in 1849 and it became the most important trading center in the county because of its location on the railroad line. Growing prosperity and influence resulted in the formation of Wilson County in 1855 from portions of Edgecombe, Nash, Wayne and Johnston counties. The town of Wilson became the county seat because of its importance as a trading center and its location at the geographic center of the county.

The Civil War/Reconstruction Period (ca. 1860-1875) put a halt to Wilson County's prosperous antebellum economy, and businesses and schools closed while many farmers lost their farms. This was a period of retrenchment and hardship.

The Tobacco Period (ca. 1875-1933) is the most recent period in the history of Wilson County, and in many ways, is the most important. As the market value for cotton and other staple crops declined in the late nineteenth century, the bright leaf (flue-cured) tobacco market grew. Because no battles were fought in the county during the Civil War, commerce made a rapid comeback. The town of Wilson set out to mold itself into a tobacco market, and by 1910 rivaled such markets as Danville, Virginia, and Winston-Salem, N. C. By 1919 Wilson was the world's largest bright leaf tobacco market. The built environment in Wilson County and the state changed rapidly and the prosperity of the county is reflected in the architecture of the period. Lucama, Black Creek, Elm City, Sims, and Stantonsburg reflect the importance of commerce during the period in the rise of brick commercial construction. Frame construction continued to be the preferred method of domestic construction. The period of Tobacco prosperity was halted by the onset of the Depression. By the mid-1930s the farmers of the county were feeling the effect of the times. Farms were repossessed; there was no money for equipment. Rural construction practically ceased and construction in towns also slowed to nearly nothing. Even as the county began to pull out of the Depression the renewed growth of the late 1930s was halted by the onset of World War II which depleted the manpower of the county, slowing the labor-intensive agricultural growth, and bringing a new slump to the economy of the county.

### C. Architectural Component

The earliest architectural style found in Wilson County is represented by the Shadrack Dickinson House (#6, Black Creek Rural District), a Georgian cottage. This single-story gable-roof rural dwelling presents an extremely plain appearance on the exterior. Documentation suggests a late eighteenth century date for the house which is two bays wide and one room deep. Ghost marks indicate the presence of one exterior end chimney, since removed. In contrast to the unassuming exterior of the house the interior boasts the best preserved Georgian woodwork of any house in the county. Wainscoting, a panelled overmantel and a corner cupboard with dentil molding and butterfly shelves complete the interior appointments. The interior appears to have once followed a hall-and-parlor plan, but the partition between the two rooms

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is no longer extant. Since the Dickinson House is the only surviving Georgian cottage in the county it is impossible to determine whether this house represents a common house type in Wilson County during this period.

Another type of house that was built during the early part of Wilson County's history that has survived in only limited numbers is the coastal cottage. Fine early examples of this style, with its swooping, dramatic roofline and bold silhouette survive in greater numbers nearer the coast, but in Wilson County the best example of the style is the Webb-Barron-Wells House (#7). The Webb-Barron-Wells House, like the Dickinson House mentioned above, is also located in the most rural section of the county. Sited on a hill it once surveyed many acres of farm land. The Webb-Barron-Wells House was probably built between 1780 and 1820, and like the Dickinson House it follows a hall-and-parlor plan. A shed extends along the rear elevation of the house and exterior end chimneys grace the gable ends. The house is one and a half stories tall and an engaged porch with chamfered columns and gaugework trim adorns the facade. Under the porch the facade is flush sheathed in contrast with the rest of the house which is clapboarded. The use of flush sheathing under a porch was apparently a common practice in the early nineteenth century in the Wilson County area and is found in several other contemporary dwellings, notably the Dr. Taylor House (#9, Taylor's Mill), the Bass House (not in MRN, but pictured in Wilson's Architectural Heritage by Kate Ohno, Wilson: 1981, page 46).

An enclosed stair, which has been replaced by an open stair, once led to the two small flush-sheathed rooms on the second floor. The interior woodwork is nicely executed, but quite simple; one mantel has a dentil motif while the other, a three-part mantel, has a heavily molded mantel shelf. Flat-panel wainscot is found in all the rooms on the first floor.

Another type of small Federal house to be found in Wilson County is represented by the John Woodard House (#6, Black Creek Rural Historic District), built circa 1800. This single-story gable roof cottage, built for a local planter, also follows a hall-and-parlor plan. Exterior end chimneys are located in the gables and the engaged porch shelters two shed rooms and a porch while a shed runs the length of the rear elevation. An early twentieth century kitchen and dining room ell is located at the rear of the building, attached by a breezeway. On the interior the John Woodard House boasts two fine full-blown tripartite Federal mantels similar to those found in a house in Saratoga Township (not in MRN, but pictured in Wilson's Architectural Heritage by Ohno, page 98) and in the Major James Scarborough House (suggested for nomination as an individual property previously, also pictured in Ohno, page 99). Similar to the John Woodard House is the Stephen Woodard (#6, Black Creek Rural Historic District), built circa 1810. The Stephen Woodard House follows almost the same plan as the John Woodard House (John Woodard was his father), except that a central chimney replaces the two exterior end chimneys and two front doors, a common feature of early nineteenth century dwellings in Wilson County, grace the facade. The interior of the Stephen Woodard House appears to have been remodelled and may date circa 1850 when

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Dr. Stephen Woodard, Stephen Woodard's son, built his house adjacent to his father.

There are few remaining examples of the larger Federal style plantation house in Wilson County. The finest example of this type of dwelling is the Major James Scarborough House (mentioned above), built circa 1821 in Saratoga Township. The Scarborough House is probably the most sophisticated as well as the best preserved example of a Federal plantation house in the county. The Scarborough House is two and one half stories tall and five-bays wide, with a gable roof, double-shoulder exterior end chimneys of common bond, and molded pattern boards. A central hall plan is followed on the interior and as mentioned above the house boasts one exceptional Federal mantel.

Other related examples built in the same style include the simple but elegant William Woodard House (#3, Woodard Family Rural Historic District), built circa 1830, the William D. Petway House (#4, Upper Town Creek Rural Historic District), built circa 1830, the Edmondson-Woodard House (#12), built circa 1830 and the Joseph John Pender House (#10), built circa 1840. All the above houses conform to a similar plan and all were built for prominent planters. The William Woodard and William D. Petway houses are two and a half-stories tall while the other houses are two stories tall. All the houses have exterior end chimneys, sheds along their rear elevations and all follow a hall-and-parlor plan. The interior finish in this group of houses ranges from the very crude finish of the Joseph John Pender House (#10) to the beautifully executed panelled mantels of the William Woodard House, to the simple tripartite mantels of the Edmondson-Woodard House and to the vernacular punchwork mantels found on the first floor of the William D. Petway House. The latter house also boasts delicate reeded Federal mantels, marbleized baseboards and finely grained painted wainscot on the second floor.

Houses were built in the Greek Revival style in Wilson County during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. These Greek Revival houses range from the extremely simple Woodard House (ca. 1850) (#3, Woodard Family Rural Historic District), a one-story, three-bay cottage with squat exterior end chimneys, a shallow gable roof and enclosed gables, to the more ambitious plantation houses of Edwin Barnes (#5, Evansdale Rural Historic District), Wiley Simms (#5, Evansdale Rural Historic District), W. H. Applewhite (#14), Hawthorne (#4, Upper Town Creek Rural Historic District) and Dr. Stephen Woodard (#6, Black Creek Rural Historic District). The Barnes, Simms, Applewhite and Woodard Houses follow a similar pattern and differ little in form from the Federal plantation houses discussed above. All are built in the traditional pattern; they are two stories tall, with gable roofs, exterior end chimneys, and sheds running the length of their rear elevations. The main features which differentiate this group of Greek Revival houses from the group of Federal houses discussed above include the slightly lower pitch of the roofs, the use of pedimented gables on the Barnes, Simms, and Woodard houses and Hawthorne and the use of two front doors in the Barnes, Simms and Woodard

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houses (the Applewhite House may also have once had this feature, but during the house's remodelling in the late nineteenth century a single front door was put in place). The use of two front doors may have been quite common in the early nineteenth century (see the Stephen Woodard House above), but whereas no Federal plantation houses with this feature have survived some smaller houses have. A notable example of the early use of two front doors in Wilson County is found in the Jonathan Thomas House (not in MRN but pictured in Ohno, page 74). The use of two front doors became reasonably common during the Greek Revival period, as noted above, although not all the plantation houses conformed to this style (see the Richard Edmondson House pictured in Ohno, page 95). The practice of building two front doors was also followed in two notable small Greek Revival Houses of the same period, the Daniel Whitley House (page 123, Ohno) and the Winstead House (page 158, Ohno).

Like the exteriors, the interiors of this group of Greek Revival houses follow the traditional pattern. The Barnes, Simms and Woodard houses follow a hall-and-parlor plan while Hawthorne is the only one of the group which has a central hall. The W. H. Applewhite House appears to have been altered from a hall-and-parlor plan to a modified central hall plan in the 1870s. In no one of these houses does the woodwork rise to the high level of academic precision found elsewhere in eastern North Carolina in counties where larger plantations flourished, but the woodwork is notably different from that found in the Federal plantation houses mentioned above. The mantels and door and window surrounds are heavier, more robust and quite vernacular in execution. The most impressive feature of any of the interiors in this group is the rich vernacular plaster ornament found in the Wiley Simms House in the form of medallions and cornices.

As indicated above, although Hawthorne is contemporary with the rest of the Greek Revival houses discussed its form is somewhat different. Like the others Hawthorne was built in rural Wilson County for a planter of some note, in this instance, Cally S. Braswell. The use of a central-hall plan in the county is also somewhat unusual during the Greek Revival period and is exemplified by Hawthorne in a double pile variation. In the other Greek Revival plantation houses a single-pile hall-and-parlor plan with a shed along the rear commonly was built. Like its fellows Hawthorne has a low-pitched gable roof with cornice returns, but due to the house's double pile configuration the placement of the exterior end chimneys is slightly to the front and off center. The vernacular finish of Hawthorne's interior also sets it apart from the other houses in this group.

Up until this point only rural dwellings have been discussed. The reason for this approach has been to emphasize the overwhelmingly rural character of Wilson County, particularly during its early history. In reality no real urban centers existed in the Wilson County area during this early period, and it was only with the coming of the railroad (the Wilmington and Weldon) in 1840 that small communities along the railroad



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lines began to expand. The oldest incorporated town within the present county limits, Stantonburg, was incorporated in 1817, but none of the fabric of this town dating from the first quarter of the nineteenth century survives, so it is impossible to give an accurate picture of the county's oldest urban environment. The county's first true urban center, the town of Wilson, was not incorporated until 1849 and its importance was confirmed when it was made the county seat in 1855. Since this nomination does not deal with the city of Wilson the architectural development of the city will only be touched on in the briefest manner. Few buildings survive in the city of Wilson which date from the first twenty-five years of its history and most of these are dwellings built in vernacular interpretations of the Italianate and Gothic Revival styles.

No full-blown examples of Italianate buildings exist outside the city limits, but the Jesse Norris House (#4, Upper Town Creek Rural Historic District) is a fine example of a rural interpretation of a Gothic Revival cottage built circa 1867. The one and a half story, three-bay Norris House boasts two cross gables and is sheathed in board and batten siding, a rare survival of this type of siding in the county. Double-shoulder common-bond exterior end chimneys grace the gable ends. On the interior a central hall plan is followed and stairs rise from the hall to the second floor. The woodwork is vernacular in character featuring simple mantels supported by plain pilasters, broad molded door surrounds, and a curiously carved newel post.

The two decades prior to the Civil War was a time of unprecedented prosperity for the Wilson County area and this prosperity was expressed by the planter class in the construction in a different sort of larger, more commodious house. A number of good examples of this type of plantation house are still extant in Wilson County. Two of the men credited with the establishment of Wilson County, General Joshua Barnes and Colonel David Williams built such houses (#15 and #4 respectively) as well as such planters as David G. W. Ward (#8, Ward-Applewhite-Thompson House), Rufus Edmundson (not included in MRN but pictured in Ohno, page 111), Elias Barnes (pictured in Ohno, page 94) and William Barnes (pictured in Ohno, page 118). This group of houses follows a fairly standard pattern; they are two stories tall, three bays wide, with a shallow hipped roof, interior chimneys, and a central hall plan. All the houses are two rooms deep and most of them have heavy Greek Revival door and window surrounds, a robust turned newel post, simple mantels supported by plain pilasters and large six-over-six windows. The stairs generally rise from the front of a broad central hall. The General Joshua Barnes House has a slightly different appearance on the interior because it was a result of a remodeling of an earlier Federal style house. One of the most outstanding features of this group of houses is the beautifully executed plaster ceiling medallions found in the main room and entrance hall of the Colonel David Williams House.

More commonly built than the double-pile mid-nineteenth century plan-

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tation house mentioned above was a modest one-story single-pile three-bay farmhouse. Literally thousands of such farmhouses exist in Wilson County dating from circa 1850 to 1920. A good early example of this type of farmhouse is the William Woodard Jr. House (#3, Woodard Family Rural Historic District). This house follows the type described above and originally had two exterior-end stepped single-shoulder chimneys laid in common bond. The Woodard House follows a central-hall plan.

During the Civil War and for several years following few major building projects were undertaken in Wilson County. The agricultural economy was disrupted not only by fortunes of war and the destruction of markets but by the breakdown of the landholding system. Formerly prosperous planters without the benefit of slaves were forced to sell off large parts of their farms changing Wilson County into an area of many small farms with sharecropping the rule rather than the exception. This division of the land into smaller farms created a demand for more farmhouses. Since the smaller land holdings could not support large plantation houses, these farmhouses were generally smaller and more modest than their predecessors. Many of the farmhouses built during this period followed the pattern of the Elder William Woodard House, mentioned above, or the Sallie Graves House (#5, Evansdale Rural Historic District), built circa 1870 for a local country doctor, J. T. Graves, and his wife, the daughter of planter Edwin Barnes (see above). The house, a pyramidal-roof cottage, is three bays wide and one room deep with interior chimneys and a central hall plan.

During the same period that dwellings like the Sallie Graves House were being built in the rural areas of Wilson County a new force, that of the Industrial Revolution, was galvanizing the county's towns. Wilson, the county seat, saw the construction of elegant Italianate homes in the 1870s and 1880s for such leading citizens as Frank Barnes and Alpheus Branch (both associated with early banks in Wilson). During the 1870s and 1880s the towns of Elm City, Black Creek, Saratoga, and Lucama were incorporated while Stantonburg was reincorporated. Much of the earliest fabric of these small towns dates from this period. The dwellings resembled those built in the county; for example, the Dr. H. D. Lucas House (#17), a one-story, three bay cottage with exposed face chimneys and a steeply pitched gable roof, was built circa 1880 in the town of Black Creek, and can be compared with similar farmhouses built in the county during the same period.

The last two decades of the nineteenth century saw rapid changes in the built environment of Wilson County. With many of these changes came the industrialization of the county towns, each one with their cotton gins, railroad depot, saw and grist mills. The city of Wilson built its first major industrial structure during this period, the Wilson Cotton Mill, circa 1883. However most of the changes which occurred in Wilson County during the period were the result of a shift from the cultivation of cotton to the cultivation of bright leaf (flue-cured) tobacco as a cash crop. Demand for the bright leaf was high and although the crop began to be grown in the county during the 1870s it was not until the

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1890s when a market was established in Wilson and warehouses and processing facilities were built, that the crop achieved widespread popularity with local farmers. The resultant prosperity of the area even exceeded that enjoyed during the antebellum period.

On the farm this prosperity was indicated by new and up-to-date farmhouses and outbuildings. Many of Wilson County's farmhouses and farm buildings date from this period. The cultivation of bright leaf tobacco created a demand for all manner of outbuildings associated with tobacco culture. Most noticeable of these buildings is the tobacco barn, a tall narrow structure built of logs or frame and used to cure the tobacco. Wood heaters, and later oil heaters were used to heat the barns. The danger of fire was high and many tobacco barns were lost through misadventure. The log tobacco barn was eventually replaced by frame and masonry (usually cinder block) barns and most recently modern metal bulk barns have been used to fulfill this need. Tobacco barns, particularly the old log ones, with saddlenotched joints and mud chinking are a vanishing species. Such log barns are located on the William Woodard Jr. farm (#3, Woodard Family Rural Historic District), Hawthorne (#4, Upper Town Creek Rural Historic District), the Webb-Barron-Wells House (#7), the Ward-Applewhite-Thompson farm (#8) and the W. H. Langley farm (#11). Other outbuildings associated with tobacco cultivation located in the multiple resource area include packhouses (for tobacco storage) and ordering pits.

Other outbuildings commonly associated with farms in the multiple resource area include barns, smoke and washhouses, well shelters, sheds, cribs and equipment shelters. Usually these buildings were constructed of frame, but some log cribs do survive. One notable example is located at Hawthorne (#4, Upper Town Creek Rural Historic District).

The farmhouses constructed during this period usually follow the same pattern as the William Woodard Jr. House (#3, Woodard Family Rural Historic District). These single-story, three-bay cottages usually have exterior end chimneys, gable roofs, a central cross gable and turned and sawnwork ornament on a generous front porch. A kitchen/dining room ell was usually attached to the rear by an open breezeway. Some pyramidal roof cottages of the same period (like the Sallie Graves House, #5, Evansdale Rural Historic District) were also built, but they are less common.

The small towns also grew during this period. The first brick commercial buildings were constructed. Usually these commercial buildings were densely packed, presenting narrow fronts with large display windows and high transoms and seldom exceeding three stories in height. Most towns had small but compact business districts consisting of only a few blocks. In Wilson the facades were notably more ornate with heavy lintels and imposing pediments while other small towns like Lucama and Elm City boasted simpler interpretations of national commercial styles. Most of the commercial buildings were constructed of brick, but a few frame commercial buildings dating from the late nineteenth century still survive in Lucama. None of the commercial buildings in the county outside the

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city limits of Wilson are known to have pressed metal facades. Residential sections grew up right around the business districts and included one and two story houses, mainly built of frame in vernacular interpretations of national styles. The predominant type of residence remained the single-story three-bay house, usually with a gable roof and exterior end chimneys. Some larger, more ambitious houses were also built ranging from the simple two-story three-bay Joel T. Wells House (#2, Elm City) to the Italianate Bailey-Harrelson House, a two-story, three-bay L-plan townhouse with a three-sided bay (also #2, Elm City).

Around the turn of the century two nationally popular styles made their impression on Wilson County builders. The Wilson County interpretation of the Queen Anne style is loose and eclectic, with asymmetrical massing and a wealth of stained glass and turned-and-sawn ornament as exemplified by the Manalocus Aycock House in Black Creek (#16) and the Bullock-Dew House (#13), a turn-of-the century equivalent of the plantation house in Old Fields Township. The Neo-Classical Revival style is also represented in Wilson County, notably in Elm City (#2) by the George A. Barnes House and the R. S. Wells House. These monumental residences boast two-story porticoes and formally arranged interiors with fine Classical and Colonial Revival woodwork. These two houses date between 1898 and 1910; the Wells House has been documented as a design by Wilson architect Charles C. Benton.

During the same period the influence of the Colonial Revival began to make itself felt in Wilson County. Many houses, like the Cox House in Elm City (#2), reflect the transition from the Queen Anne style to the Colonial Revival style. The result in this case is usually an asymmetrical massed residence with Colonial Revival details such as classical columns, fanlight and elliptical windows, and dentil molding. Three major Wilson County houses were remodelled in the Colonial Revival style during the 1910s.

In 1911 the W. H. Langley House (#11) was converted from a modest single-story, three-bay farmhouse to the present commodious two-story dwelling with pedimented dormers, Palladian windows and an intricate wraparound porch. This type of porch with pedimented projecting pavilions on the corners of the buildings has been called "the Elm City porch" since it is found only in the county's Elm City Area.

At about the same time as the Langley House was remodelled the W. G. Sharpe House (also in Elm City, #2) was raised to two stories and given many Colonial Revival details. The hipped roof and large pedimented dormers with their latticed windows reveal the owner's interest in following the current national style.

Like the Sharpe House the L. P. Woodard House (#3, Woodard Family Rural Historic District) was built in the late nineteenth century and it was renovated in the Colonial Revival style circa 1911. Like the Sharpe House it was also raised to two stories, given a hipped roof, a central dormer, a pedimented porch, and Colonial Revival woodwork.

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Thus, builders in both urban and rural areas emulated national styles and trends in the early twentieth century in Wilson County. The Bungalow style, introduced in the county during the 1910s also fared well. A number of farmhouses built in the county during the 1920s and 1930s follow a simple bungalow plan. In the small towns the bungalow was also popular (see #2, Elm City Municipal Historic District and #1, Lucama Municipal Historic District), and in the case of the Dr. Robert Putney House, ca. 1920 (#2, Elm City), the bungalow reached new heights of excellence. The Putney bungalow is a masonry structure with a slate roof, shingled central dormer, and rustic stone columns on the porch.

In the mid and late 1920s the substantial brick Colonial Revival house gained popularity, particularly in Wilson and Elm City. These houses are two stories tall and boast both Colonial Revival and Mission Revival details. The L. S. Farmer House in Elm City (#2, Elm City Municipal Historic District) is a fine example of this type of house. Built in 1928 for Farmer, a planter and merchant of some prominence, the house was designed in the Colonial Revival style. S. B. Moore, a Wilson architect, designed the house and added interest and texture to the otherwise bland brick facade by using tiles on the roof and building a central semi-circular portico at the entrance.

The Depression brought an end to the golden age of building in Wilson County. The county only began to emerge from the economic slump engendered by the Depression in the late 1930s. Some dwellings and major civic buildings (notably WPA projects for the Wilson County Public Library and the Wilson Municipal Building in 1939, both in the city of Wilson) were constructed, mainly in Wilson, but the rural areas benefitted little. The second World War once again halted construction in the county, and the housing boom that followed the close of the war was mainly restricted to the city of Wilson, although small towns like Elm City did see the construction of some post-war housing. The overall quality of the construction during this period cannot compare with the pre-Depression buildings discussed earlier in this section, and no single building or group of buildings in the county multiple resource area built since 1929 can claim to possess overwhelming architectural or historical significance.

#### E. Survey Methodology

The Wilson County Historic Buildings Survey was conducted over the duration of one year from February 1980 - February 1981. The principal investigator was Kate Ohno, a preservation consultant, working for the Wilson County Board of Commissioners. She worked with Hugh B. Johnston, Jr., the county historian, J. Marshall Daniel, the president of the Wilson County Genealogical and Historical Society and a number of local contacts in each township.

Every road in the county was surveyed, and all man-made structures were assessed as to historic and/or architectural significance. Over 250 sites, including municipal districts were recorded verbally and

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photographed. No archeological investigation of any kind was conducted.

The principal investigator, working with the Survey and Planning Branch, Division of Archives and History, recommended properties for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Included in the recommended properties are significant and unique examples of architecture, properties associated with leading figures in Wilson County history and those that reflect the development of Wilson County through agriculture, commerce, religion and transportation. The properties were also selected for their architectural integrity as well as their age and significance. A number of significant properties have been identified in the county which are not included in the nomination because of their deteriorated condition even though their significance equalled those properties included in the nomination. The properties nominated in spite of their deteriorated condition possess exceptional significance, and perhaps listing them on the National Register will provide some impetus to stabilizing and upgrading their physical condition.

## 8. Significance

See individual site forms

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 type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input 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 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 N/A

Builder/Architect N/A

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

A.

The historic resources of Wilson County, North Carolina, comprise a variety of buildings and districts. These buildings and districts exemplify the development of this rural area from the early nineteenth century until the Depression. Wilson is a rural county in a state that has been predominantly rural during most of its history, and the Wilson County landscape reflects this rural heritage. The rural landscape with its many small farmhouses shows the continuing importance of the small farm to the county's economy. The small farmhouses set in shady groves with their cluster of outbuildings are an important record of rural life, tastes and farming practices in eastern North Carolina. Traditional forms and building techniques are repeated in generations of buildings.

The agricultural economy of the area improved with the construction of the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad in 1840 and its successor, the Wilson to Greenville Plank Road in 1853. The resultant prosperity gave rise to the construction of a number of commodious and more stylish plantation houses in the 1830s, 1840s and 1850s. These houses ranged from the traditional two-story frame hall-and-parlor plan house with a gable roof and exterior end chimneys to a two-story frame, three-bay central hall plan house with a hipped roof and interior chimneys. This group of houses is architecturally significant as they express local versions of the nationally popular Federal and Greek Revival styles.

The post-war period saw the beginnings of industry in the Wilson County area and this introduction of industry, combined with a gradual recovery of the agricultural economy led to the incorporation of numerous small towns in the county, including Elm City and Lucama which exemplify the architectural development of small railroad towns in the county. The cohesive, low-rise brick business districts combined with the surrounding residential development dating from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries reflect the character of small town life in North Carolina. The residential styles run the gamut of Italianate, Colonial Revival, Neo-Classical Revival to Bungalows and the houses are usually built of frame although some brick and stuccoed masonry structures are also inter-mixed. These residences made up complete neighborhoods, with tree-lined streets emphasizing the unity of the streetscapes. The combination of the residential and commercial structures with their well-preserved facades is a living record of turn-of-century life in a small town in North Carolina.



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**B. Broad historical development of the area**

Land grants for property in what is now Wilson County began to be transferred in the early eighteenth century. The earliest grant recorded for the area was to Lewis Conner in 1730.<sup>1</sup> The first white settler of the area is reputed to have been the Reverend John Thomas Sr., who came to the Wilson County area in 1741.<sup>2</sup> As settlement moved west from the coast larger numbers of new inhabitants came in the 1740s and 1750s. Here they found a wilderness that supplied their basic needs: game and fish for food, wood for building, and skins for some of their clothing.<sup>3</sup> The vast pine forests provided the basis for a thriving naval stores industry.<sup>4</sup> Subsistence farming and naval stores provided the basis of the local economy. Land and slaves were the chief forms of wealth.<sup>5</sup> The area was hampered in its growth by the lack of navigable waterways and limited water power, so its population grew slowly.

In 1756 the area's first congregation, the Toisnot (Primitive) Baptist Church was founded by John Thomas, Sr.<sup>6</sup> Since most of the land which became Wilson County came from Edgecombe County, except the southwestern corner which came from Johnston County, the bulk of the area's early residents looked to the town of Tarboro, which became the Edgecombe County seat in 1764, for leadership. Obligatory militia musters, voting and other county business as well as commerce took them to the town on the Tar River and Tarboro became the most important center for the area's business until the founding of the town of Wilson.

The Revolutionary War had little impact on the rural, sparsely settled area which later became Wilson County. A skirmish took place at Peacock's Bridge in the southeastern section of what is now Wilson County in May, 1781.<sup>7</sup> The only major troop movement in the area was when Lord Cornwallis' troops traversed the county.<sup>8</sup>

Conditions after the war produced a steady increase in the area's population. Corn, pork and naval stores were the leading staples and cotton was also grown, but not on a major basis.<sup>9</sup> Despite the abundant and fertile land, agricultural pursuits did not produce a high standard of living. Methods of cultivation remained primitive and the low price of staple crops at established markets and high transportation costs discouraged farmers from producing cash crops.<sup>10</sup> Contentnea Creek was the only navigable waterway in the area but barges were only able to travel a short distance to a landing just above Rountree's Bridge, south of the present city of Wilson.<sup>11</sup> Contentnea's use as a route for products of the region gave rise in the early nineteenth century to a small settlement along the banks of the creek near the present Greene County line. The community, christened Stantonsburg, became in 1817 the first incorporated town in what is now Wilson County.<sup>12</sup> The area's first documented school, Hopewell Academy, was established just outside of Stantonsburg by the 1820s.<sup>13</sup>

The following decade brought permanent changes to the Wilson County area. In 1834 the Wilmington and Raleigh Railroad (later the Wilmington



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and Weldon Railroad) was chartered, which when completed in 1840 joined the state's chief port with the Richmond and Petersburg Railroad.<sup>14</sup> The railroad opened the Wilson County area for development and three depots were established: Bardin's Depot in the south (the present site of the town of Black Creek), Joyner's Depot in the north (a mile from the present site of the town of Elm City), and Toisnot Depot in the center (now the city of Wilson). The advent of the railroad brought an end to the area's predominantly subsistence economy. Large plantations using slave labor grew during this period. Land values and farm productivity increased and the area's second town, Wilson, now the county seat, was incorporated in 1849.<sup>15</sup> The newly founded town grew during a period of unprecedented prosperity that held sway in the state in the 1840s and 1850s.<sup>16</sup> Although agriculture continued to form the basis of the area's economy, better transportation and increased capital for development stimulated commerce while rising crop prices benefited every farmer. The area's second breakthrough in transportation came in 1853 with the completion of the Wilson to Greenville Plank Road linking Wilson by better roads to a port on the Tar River for the first time.<sup>17</sup>

The 1850s was a landmark decade for another reason; it was in 1855 that the long, drawn-out battle over the formation of a new county was won. Leading Edgecombe County planters General Joshua Barnes and Colonel David Williams succeeded in pressing for the passage of an act establishing Wilson County.<sup>18</sup> Since the eighteenth century the original area comprising Edgecombe County had been subdivided to form many new counties. In 1855 when an act to ratify the formation of Wilson County was passed the boundaries which were drawn called for the inclusion of nearly half the area of present Wilson County originally to come from Edgecombe County while Nash contributed 21.32%, Wayne 16.56% and Johnston 12.18%.<sup>19</sup>

Wilson County shared in the hardship of the entire state during the Civil War, and the conflict put a definite end to the booming economy of the area. Although no battles were ever fought on Wilson County soil, the county retained a good deal of importance during the later war years because the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad became "the lifeline of the Confederacy" supplying Lee's armies in Virginia from the only open port left in the Confederacy, Wilmington.<sup>20</sup> A confederate military hospital was also established in Wilson.<sup>21</sup>

The county's economic base was severely eroded by the war and agriculture, which provided the livelihood of most county residents, was thrown into disarray by the emancipation of the slaves. The scarcity of labor and capital hampered the recovery of the area from the economic trials caused by the war. Gradually the positive factors which had weighed in Wilson's favor before the war once again were brought into play and the county succeeded in recovering its prosperity earlier than many other sections of the state. The turpentine industry was once again prospering by 1870<sup>22</sup> and by the early 1880s the town of Wilson's first major industry, the Wilson Cotton Mill was in operation. The first local banks were

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established, providing a basis for residential and commercial expansion.<sup>23</sup> Agriculture did not fare so well, and life for the rural residents of the county continued to be unstable through the end of the century. Sharecropping became a way of life and falling agricultural product prices took their toll.<sup>24</sup> Bright leaf tobacco began to be grown in Wilson County in the 1870s as an antidote to low cotton prices, and by 1880 the reports of the state geologist, W. C. Kerr, made it clear that the county's soil and climate were well suited to the cultivation of the desirable flue-cured leaf.<sup>25</sup> A massive farmer-education program was begun, and farmers learned through newspapers, books and first-hand experience how the tobacco should be grown and cured.<sup>26</sup> More and more tobacco began to be grown in the county, and in 1890 the Wilson Tobacco Market was founded.<sup>27</sup> Tobacco processing firms built their factories in the town of Wilson and increasing numbers of warehouses were built.<sup>28</sup> The agricultural prosperity that the area had known during the antebellum period was revived.

Social conditions in the county also improved as the century progressed. By 1880 a County Board of Health had been formed,<sup>29</sup> and in 1881 the State Legislature founded a teacher-training school in Wilson.<sup>30</sup> This school, held in the summer at the Wilson Collegiate Institute, gave rise to the first Wilson Graded School and in 1885 the county school system was founded.<sup>31</sup>

The railway system also expanded during this period and a branch line was built from Wilson to the South Carolina line in 1886.<sup>32</sup> The Norfolk and Southern Railroad was completed in 1907<sup>33</sup> and a number of small towns sprung up along the lines, including Lucama, Sims, and Evansdale, while Stantonsburg was re-incorporated.

The twentieth century brought to Wilson County increased wealth and population. County-wide services, notably the school system were improved and the county's first institution of higher education, Atlantic Christian College, was founded in the town of Wilson in 1902.<sup>34</sup> The first county agricultural agent was hired in 1912 and a home extension agent was employed in 1915.<sup>35</sup>

Tobacco cultivation, sales and processing continued to grow in importance and by the 1910s the town of Wilson was one of the three largest tobacco markets in the world.<sup>36</sup> In 1919 Wilson became the world's largest bright leaf tobacco market, a title which it held until circa 1960.<sup>37</sup> High tobacco prices brought prosperity to the entire county. Roads were improved, new consolidated schools were built and the only country club on the Atlantic Coast Line (formerly the Wilmington and Weldon) Railroad between Richmond and Charleston was constructed in the town of Wilson.<sup>38</sup> The focus of rural life was growing tobacco and the focus of urban life was warehousing and processing that tobacco. In the 1920s the county's interests were involved in the conflict between the Tri-State Tobacco Growers

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Association which wanted to put an end to the auction system of selling tobacco and the North Carolina Warehousemen's Association.<sup>39</sup> When the Cooperative was defeated in 1927, the Warehousemen's Association celebrated at the famous "Silver Lake Convention" in Taylor's Township, one of the largest private parties ever held in the county.<sup>40</sup>

Wilson County's period of booming prosperity was ended by the depression, and few structures of historical importance were built after 1929 in the rural areas and small towns of the county.

Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Author's interview with Wilson County historian Hugh B. Johnston on November 17, 1980, hereinafter cited as Johnston interview.

<sup>2</sup> Johnston interview.

<sup>3</sup> Hugh Talmage Lefler & Albert Ray Newsome, The History of A Southern State: North Carolina, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1954), 20, hereinafter cited as Lefler & Newsome, North Carolina.

<sup>4</sup> Lefler & Newsome, North Carolina, 18.

<sup>5</sup> Lefler & Newsome, North Carolina, 82.

<sup>6</sup> Sidney B. Denny, Wilson Primitive Baptist Church, Wilson, North Carolina 1756-1946. (Wilson, N.C.: 1946).

<sup>7</sup> Hugh B. Johnston, "Historical Facts About Wilson", n.p., n.d.; hereinafter cited as Johnston, "Historical Facts."

<sup>8</sup> Johnston, "Historical Facts."

<sup>9</sup> Lefler & Newsome, North Carolina, 299 & 302.

<sup>10</sup> Lefler & Newsome, North Carolina, 298.

<sup>11</sup> Johnston interview.

<sup>12</sup> Kate Ohno, Wilson County's Architectural Heritage, (Wilson, N.C.: 1981), 9., hereinafter cited as Ohno, Wilson County.

<sup>13</sup> Tarboro Free Press (Tarboro), February 15, 1828.

<sup>14</sup> Lefler & Newsome, North Carolina, 346.

<sup>15</sup> Daisy Hendley Gold, "A Town Named Wilson," unpublished manuscript available from the Wilson County Public Library, hereinafter cited as Gold, "Wilson."

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<sup>16</sup>Lefler & Newsome, North Carolina, 369.

<sup>17</sup>For further information see the Private Laws of North Carolina, 1850-1851; Tarboro Free Press (Tarboro) January 25, 1851, March 1, 1851, August 30, 1851, November 8, 1851; Robert B. Starling, "The Plank Road Movement," North Carolina Historical Review, XVI (January 1939), 1-22.

<sup>18</sup>Gold, "Wilson," 21.

<sup>19</sup>Ohno, Wilson County, 9.

<sup>20</sup>Lefler & Newsome, North Carolina, 431.

<sup>21</sup>Hugh B. Johnston, "Records of the Wilson Confederate Hospital 1862-1865," Wilson: 1954.

<sup>22</sup>Lefler & Newsome, North Carolina, 434.

<sup>23</sup>Ohno, Wilson County, 12.

<sup>24</sup>Lefler & Newsome, North Carolina, 491.

<sup>25</sup>Nannie May Tilley, The Bright Leaf Tobacco Industry 1860-1929, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1948), 169-170, hereinafter cited as Tilley, Tobacco.

<sup>26</sup>Tilley, Tobacco, 142.

<sup>27</sup>Gold, "Wilson," 135.

<sup>28</sup>Tilley, Tobacco, 140.

<sup>29</sup>Wilson Advance (Wilson), March 1880.

<sup>30</sup>Clark Gerow Shreve, "Development of Education to 1900 in Wilson, North Carolina" thesis submitted to the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1941, 65, hereinafter cited as Shreve, "Education in Wilson."

<sup>31</sup>Wilson County School Board Minutes, July 6, 1885.

<sup>32</sup>R.D.W. Connor, History of North Carolina, Vol. 3 (N.Y.: Lewis Publishing Co., 1919), 397.

<sup>33</sup>Lefler & Newsome, North Carolina, 487.

<sup>34</sup>Ohno, Wilson County, 16-17.

<sup>35</sup>Wilson County Agricultural Center Files.

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- <sup>36</sup> Tilley, Tobacco, 355.  
<sup>37</sup> Tilley, Tobacco, 355.  
<sup>38</sup> Ohno, Wilson County, 17-19.  
<sup>39</sup> Tilley, Tobacco, 478.  
<sup>40</sup> Tilley, Tobacco, 642.

**C. Major historical figures related to the area.**

The two most significant historical figures associated with the Wilson County Multiple Resource Area are General Joshua Barnes and Colonel David Williams, who are credited with being the two most influential men in the formation of Wilson County as we know it today. (See Broad Historical Development (B) above). Both Barnes' and Williams' houses still stand in Wilson County and these houses are included in the Multiple Resource Nomination not only because of their associations with the founders of Wilson County but because of their architectural significance. Both houses are similar in form and age and express the taste and ambition of the Wilson County area planter class in the mid-nineteenth century. Colonel David Williams' house forms a part of the Upper Town Creek Rural Historic District (#4) while General Joshua Barnes' house is nominated as an individual property (#15).

**D. Areas of significance with specific examples:**

**Agriculture:** Farm complexes include the following properties:

1. Woodard Family Rural Historic District (#3) includes three major farmhouses which belonged to William Woodard, William Woodard, Jr. and L. P. Woodard, (ca. 1830, ca. 1850 and ca. 1911 respectively). The Woodard Family Rural Historic District includes land along both sides of Rt. 264 in between Wilson and Driver's Store. The gently rolling landscape includes approximately five hundred and fifty acres of prime agricultural land, once a part of William Woodard's extensive antebellum plantation. Today most of the land is still used to raise corn and tobacco. The Woodard Family Rural District includes three generations of farmhouse architecture ranging in style from Federal to Colonial Revival. Associated with the William Woodard House and the William Woodard, Jr. House are extensive and well-preserved farm buildings including a well house, pack-houses, tobacco barns, tenant dwellings and a summerhouse. All three farmhouses are in a good state of preservation and except for the remodeling of the L. P. Woodard House in the Colonial Revival style ca. 1911 they are little altered.

2. The Upper Town Creek Rural Historic District (#4) consists of about one thousand seven hundred and fifty-five acres of rolling

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agricultural land bordered on the south by Town Creek and on the north by SR1003. Corn, tobacco and soybeans are raised on the land as well as hogs. Upper Town Creek Rural Historic District includes four farmhouses ranging in date from the 1830s to the 1860s. All the farmhouses in the district retain to some extent farm buildings dating prior to the turn of the century, but most notable in the district are probably the log crib and tobacco barns associated with Hawthorne and the smokehouse, kitchen and other storage buildings associated with the W. D. Petway House. All the farmhouses are in a good state of preservation with the exception of Hawthorne, which is vacant.

3. The Evansdale Rural Historic District (#5) consists of over one thousand acres of land between Contentnea Creek on the west and the Norfolk and Southern Railroad on the east. The properties are arranged along SR 1602 near the Evansdale community. The land in the district is nearly level and the soil is a sandy loam that produces the finest crops in the county. Corn and tobacco are still raised in the district. Evansdale Rural Historic District includes two major Greek Revival farmhouses, the Edwin Barnes House and the Wiley Simms House (both ca. 1840) and a post-bellum cottage, the Sallie Graves House. All three residences have well-preserved late nineteenth-early twentieth century farm buildings associated with the site.

4. The Black Creek Rural Historic District (#6) is situated just north of the run of Black Creek and encompasses about one thousand two hundred and fifteen acres of valuable farmland. The gently rolling terrain is used to raise tobacco and corn. Black Creek Rural Historic District includes five farmhouses ranging in date from the last quarter of the eighteenth century to the 1850s. The most significant collection of outbuildings in the district are those associated with the Stephen Woodard and Dr. Stephen Woodard Houses (ca. 1810 and ca. 1850 respectively). Besides the two houses built by father and son the site also includes a number of tobacco barns, packhouses, tenant houses, and a 1920s rural school.

Architecture: the following examples embody various stages of the county's architectural development, including the types listed below:

1. Coastal cottage, one or one and a half story frame houses with engaged porches and steeply pitched roof lines.

A. Webb-Barron-Wells House (#7) ca. 1793-1820. Hall-and-parlor plan with rear shed, flat panel wainscot and Federal mantels. Enclosed stair has been altered, but otherwise house is entirely intact. Good late-nineteenth-early-twentieth century farm buildings, especially log tobacco barns on the site.

2. Federal plantation house, two-story frame building with a one-story shed-roof porch, rear shed, hall-and-parlor plan, and sometimes enclosed stair.

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A. Edmondson-Woodard House, (#12) ca. 1830. Hall-and-parlor-plan dwelling with triple row of gaugework ornament in gables, simple mantels.

B. Joseph John Pender House, (#10) ca. 1840. Hall-and-parlor-plan house with single shoulder exterior end chimneys and gaugework trim on porch.

3. Greek Revival plantation houses similar in form to the Federal plantation house; two-story frame, hall-and-parlor plan, rear shed, exterior end chimneys, but with distinctive Greek Revival details.

A. W. H. Applewhite House, (#14) ca. 1840. Two-story frame house with gable roof, double-gallery porch, rear shed. Heavily remodelled in the 1870s in the Victorian taste, but retains its original mantels and some early woodwork.

4. Ambitious late Greek Revival plantation houses usually rising two stories in height with hipped roof.

A. General Joshua Barnes House, (#15) ca. 1844. Two-story frame house which incorporates an earlier Federal single-pile house. Remodelled in the Victorian taste between 1865 and 1875.

B. Ward-Applewhite-Thompson House, (#8) ca. 1850. Two-story frame Greek Revival house with hipped roof, interior chimneys and simple Greek Revival finish.

5. Nineteenth century agro-industrial buildings, constructed to mill grain, gin cotton, etc.

A. Taylor's Mill, (#9) ca. 1860. Mill complex encompassing a two-story frame mill powered by water which served as a grist and flour mill. A saw mill, two cotton gins, tenant housing for millworkers and a miller's house also associated with the site.

6. Modest late nineteenth century dwellings constructed in great numbers after Reconstruction and prior to the 1920s exemplifying urbanization and the rise of many small farms were commonly constructed of frame, one story in height, usually with a gable roof and exterior end chimneys with sawn and turned ornament on the front porch. These buildings also represent the most commonly built rural buildings in the county between 1870 and 1920; they were used as both farmhouses and townhouses.

A. Dr. H. D. Lucas House, (#17) ca. 1880. Modest local doctor's house built facing the railroad tracks in Black Creek. One-story frame dwelling with steeply pitched gable roof, bracketed eaves, exposed-face exterior end chimneys and attached Greek Revival office building.

B. Elm City Municipal Historic District (#2).

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C. Lucama Municipal Historic District (#1).

7. Ambitious turn-of-the-century residences showing asymmetrical massing and complex designs as well as local millwork.

A. Manalocus Aycock House (#16), ca. 1900-1901. Two-story frame townhouse with hipped roof and crockets, stained glass and a wraparound porch with a polygonal porch pavilion.

B. Bullock=Dew House (#13), ca. 1902. Two-story frame farmhouse with hipped slate roof with crockets, rich sawn and turned ornament, square panes of stained glass in upper window sashes and elaborate wrap-around porch.

C. Elm City Municipal Historic District, notably Deans-Doles House (#2), ca. 1897.

8. Colonial Revival residences built shortly after the turn-of-the century incorporating some aspects of the Queen Anne style in terms of massing and some Colonial Revival motifs.

A. Elm City Municipal Historic District (#2) - notably the W. G. Sharpe House and the J. W. Hays House.

B. W. H. Langley House (#11), ca. 1850, remodelled ca. 1911. Two story Colonial Revival house with pedimented dormers, Palladian windows and intricate sawn and turned porch.

9. Classical Revival residences.

A. Elm City Historic District (#2) - notably the R. S. Wells House and the G. A. Barnes House built ca. 1910 and ca. 1895-1905, respectively. Two-story frame townhouses with hipped roofs and two-story pedimented porticoes.

Commerce: The business districts of the Elm City and Lucama Municipal Historic Districts exemplify the development of the small railroad town in the late nineteenth century in eastern North Carolina.

Religion: The small town church was in Wilson County a focal point of not only religious but social activities in the community. The churches mentioned below form an integral part in their respective historic districts.

A. Toisnot Primitive Baptist Church, ca. 1875, Elm City Municipal Historic District (#2), is the oldest church in Elm City and houses one of the town's oldest congregations.

B. Elm City Methodist Church, ca. 1929, Elm City Municipal Historic District (#2), houses the town's oldest congregation.



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C. Lucama Methodist Church, ca. 1915, Lucama Municipal Historic District (#1), houses the area's first Methodist congregation in an early twentieth century frame church that has been largely unaltered.

Transportation: The position of the Elm City Depot (Elm City Municipal Historic District #2) and the Lucama Depot (Lucama Municipal Historic District #1) shows the critical importance of the railroad in the development of small towns before the introduction of improved roads and the easy availability of automotive transport.

**F. Preservation Activities in Wilson County**

The economy of Wilson County has traditionally been based on agriculture. From the time that the area's first settlers came to the region in the mid-eighteenth century until the present the bulk of the county's population has earned its living from working the land. Land in Wilson County is still highly valued both in terms of money and in terms of sentimental worth, but the historically significant man-made structures on the land are consistently undervalued. One of the main reasons for this attitude is the change in the lifestyle of many residents of rural Wilson County. Farming, particularly since World War II, has become highly mechanized and requires less supervision than ever before. Wilson, the county seat, has grown and industrialized rapidly during this same period, attracting many former county residents. Meanwhile, the number of vacant dwellings in the county has drastically increased. School consolidation in the 1920s caused the decline of the one-room schoolhouse and educational trends in the 1970s and 1980s have resulted in the destruction of a number of the substantial 1920s vintage schools. The proliferation of the automobile and the increase in shopping centers has caused a high vacancy rate in buildings in the commercial centers of the small towns and in the traditional country stores. Changes in farming practices have caused many types of farm buildings to be neglected rather than maintained. The old log and frame tobacco barns with wood-fired heaters are a vanishing species, modern bulk barns taking their place. With little cotton being grown in the county no documented cotton presses survive and cotton gins are rare.

No county-wide preservation effort has yet been made to encourage the maintenance and continued use of these structures. The county as a whole could probably support a great deal of preservation activity. The city of Wilson is a bustling trade center with diversified industry and several of the small towns, notably Elm City and Stantonsburg, have a strong local industrial base as well as rich surrounding farmland. The county is bisected from north to south by Rt. 301, a four-lane highway which is part of the traditional New York to Florida route. Rt. 301 has been in some part replaced in importance by the newly opened I-95 which runs north to south near the western edge of the county. Both Rt. 301 and I-95 bring numerous tourists through the county yearly, as well as providing easy access to the larger industrial town of Rocky Mount to the north and other smaller industrial towns like Kenly to the south. The county is bisected east to west

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by Rt. 264 which is four-laned to the state capital, Raleigh, in the west. The four-laning of Rt. 264 from Wilson, in the geographic center of the county, to Greenville and other points on the coastal plain is to be accomplished within the next few years. Thus, the county road system provides excellent access for commuters to both the county seat and other major population areas outside the county. Because of the county's relatively small size a trip from Wilson to any other part of the county never exceeds fifteen miles.

A real problem exists in the county in matching vacant historic structures with new owners who would want to rehabilitate: the landholding patterns in the county are a major pitfall. Land in the county has historically only been transferred within the family and this practice is changing very gradually. Few rural property owners are willing to sell their property, even a few acres. Even if a rural historic property can be acquired it is difficult to borrow money to rehabilitate it and to find qualified contractors to complete the work.

Preservation of Wilson County's architectural resources has mainly been achieved by the continuous maintenance of the building(s) by their owners over a period of generations. Sometimes the owners occupy the structures themselves, but structures have also been successfully preserved when tenants lease the property. The key to the preservation of such structures seems to lie in the involvement of both owner and tenant in efforts to maintain the structure.

Interest in restoring and/or rehabilitating older dwellings is growing gradually in rural Wilson County. The most notable major rehabilitation carried out recently is that of the Bullock-Dew House in Old Fields Township, but efforts are being made in other parts of the county. The county also boasts a local historical society and an extensive local history collection at the public library. The funding by the county commissioners of a county-wide historic buildings inventory and subsequently the publication of a book on the subject is indicative of the commitment of the public sector to historic preservation. It is hoped that with the publication in 1981 of Wilson County's Architectural Heritage that more interest and investment in historic properties will be engendered on the local level. The planning board of Elm City, the second largest town in the county, is considering the creation of a local historic district commission and it is to be hoped that other towns in the county will also consider including provisions for historic properties in their zoning ordinances.

G. The choice of the combination of districts and individual sites included in the nomination.

The Wilson County Multiple Resource Nomination is made up of eleven individual properties, four rural districts and two municipal districts. Each individual property as well as each district was chosen because it represented some aspect of the county's history or its architectural development,

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or both. The individual properties were chosen with particular care to show the best examples of the various architectural styles represented in the county or because of their association with an important historical figure. The rural districts exemplify the essence of the county's rural landscape; the terrain, the farming practices, and the buildings associated with farm life over a period of many years. Each rural district shows the pattern of landholding in farm families, particularly in the case of the Woodard Family Rural Historic District (#3) where one large plantation established in the early nineteenth century was subdivided as it passed through the hands of four generations of Woodards.

The municipal districts were chosen from all the small towns in the county to show small town life. These districts are dominated by buildings constructed at the turn of the century when the resource area was booming. These two municipal districts, Elm City and Lucama (#2 and #1), are very different and yet each in its own way exemplifies life in a small railroad town in eastern North Carolina. Both districts have a large number of interesting, well preserved buildings dating from the late nineteenth century until the Depression.

Ten out of the eleven individual properties are residential and of the residential properties only two are located in a small town. Other outstanding urban residential properties are included in the municipal districts. The predominance of the residential properties is indicative of their importance, particularly the farm and plantation houses, which were the centers of rural life. Few commercial, industrial or religious buildings can compare in richness of historical association and architectural significance to this group of residences.

The only non-residential individual property to be included in the nomination is Taylor's Mill (#9), the only extant mill complex remaining in the county.

The only property not included on this list that appears to be of enough significance to merit nomination is the Major James Scarborough House in Saratoga Township. The Scarborough House was nominated individually and is awaiting review by the National Register.

#### I. Integration of the architectural survey into the planning process.

A 178-page softbound book entitled Wilson County's Architectural Heritage has been published by Wilson County. This book and copies of the survey files will be used by the county planning department as a guide to future development schemes. Copies of the publication will be disseminated throughout the state and the county and a copy will be on file at Region I Headquarters, the office of the regional planning unit.

The results of the survey will further be integrated into the state-wide planning process through the use of computerized survey forms. This

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information will be entered into a data bank in Raleigh which will be accessible to all state agencies.

The results of the survey are presently being reviewed by the towns of Lucama and Elm City as a part of an effort to set up local planning boards and a zoning ordinance for each town. The creation of a local historic district is being discussed in Elm City.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

## 10. Geographical Data See individual site forms

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

UMT References See individual site forms

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Verbal boundary description and justification

See individual site forms

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
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state	N/A	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

Kate Ohno, Consultant to Wilson County  
name/title

Survey & Planning Branch  
organization Archeology & Historic Preservation Section date July 11, 1985

N.C. Division of Archives & History

street & number 109 E. Jones Street telephone (919) 733-6545

city or town Raleigh state N. C. 27611

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is: See individual site forms  
\_\_\_\_ national \_\_\_\_ state X local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *William S. Riney, Jr.*

title State Historic Preservation Office date July 11, 1985

For HCRRS use only

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

*See Continuation sheet for listing*  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration