

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Cooleemee

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

At end of S.R. 1812

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Mocksville

VICINITY OF

5th

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

North Carolina

CODE

37

COUNTY

Davie

CODE

059

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERICAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Peter Wilson Hairston III

STREET & NUMBER

Route 2

CITY, TOWN

Mocksville

VICINITY OF

STATE

North Carolina

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Davie County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Mocksville

STATE

North Carolina

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE

1944

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Cngress

CITY, TOWN

East Capitol and Independence Avenue, Washington, D.C.

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" 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

Cooleemee, described in a contemporary publication as an "Anglo-Grecian villa," surmounts a knoll in the farmland in a bend of the Yadkin River. The four equal wings of the structure extend from a central octagonal core which is topped by an octagonal cupola. The end of each wing of the two-story stuccoed brick building has a pedimented gable with a bay window at the first level. One-story porches of differing types occur within the angles of the building. The house is set upon a low foundation of dressed granite above a full finished basement of random fieldstone. Giving continuity to the broken massing of the structure is the wide molded architrave, frieze, and dentil cornice that extends completely around the house and frames the typanum of each pediment. The roof of the villa is covered with standing-seam tin. Two stuccoed brick interior chimneys project from the roof, one located in the north angle of the wings, the other in the south angle of the wings. Each chimney is flat-paneled and terminates in a heavy molded cap. The boxed cupola eaves, accented at each corner by a pair of small foliate brackets, are capped by a low hip roof. A formal boxwood garden surrounding the villa repeats the projection of the wings.

The main (west) facade is distinguished by an academic three-bay, one-story porch that runs along the west sides of the northwest and southwest wings and the core. Fluted Ionic columns support an architrave with fascia moldings and a frieze surmounted by a dentil cornice beneath the low hip roof. The entrance in the central bay (in the core) consists of a single wide raised-paneled door set on a granite sill and flanked by four-pane sidelights. A single flat panel appears beneath each sidelight, and bead-and-reel molding frames the entrance.

The first level of the structure is lit by windows containing six-over-six sash, each set in a molded architrave upon a granite sill and flanked by louvered shutters. The bay windows at the ends of the wings exhibit variations in design. At the ends of the wings flanking the central entrance (the northwest and southwest wings) are identical bow windows, each with three rectangular windows containing four-over-four sash. The low hip roof of each is accentuated by a molded frieze and cornice. The southeast wing has a demi-hexagonal projection containing two four-over-four sash windows and capped by a flat roof with identical cornice treatment. The northeast projection is rectangular in configuration and larger than the other bay windows, but it is identical in treatment to the southeast one. The windows at the second level throughout the house are roundheaded and contain four-over-four sash with molded architraves, granite sills, and round-headed louvered shutters. The muntins of each upper sash form a simple tracery pattern. These windows exist in pairs in each bay of the wings and as a triple window in each exposed face of the central core. A single shutterless window of this type also illuminates each face of the octagonal cupola.

(Continued)

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input 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	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	After designs by
1850		W. H. Ranlett

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Land for Cooleemee Plantation was acquired in 1817 by Captain Peter Hairston from Henry County, Virginia, who had served in the American Revolution. In 1817 he bought two tracts of 2,570 acres each from General Jesse A. Pearson for \$20,000. These tracts were located in Davie County on the Yadkin River, and apparently the plantation was already called Cooleemee. There are a number of stories relating the origin of the name. One tells that when on a military campaign against the Creek Indians, Pearson had encamped in a place with the Indian name Cooleemee after which he had named his tracts.

Captain Peter Hairston never lived at Cooleemee. When he died in 1832 he willed the estate to his great-grandson, Peter Wilson Hairston, the builder of the present house at Cooleemee Plantation. In 1849, Peter Wilson Hairston married Columbia Stuart, a sister of J. E. B. Stuart, later a famous Confederate general. The Hairstons then came to live at Cooleemee. On the Slave Schedule of the United States Census of 1850, Peter Hairston is shown as the owner of 125 slaves, reflecting a very extensive plantation.

The initial order for the building of the present house, dated September 1850, called for a total contract cost of \$9,000. The plan of the house was derived from Plate 32 of Volume I of W. H. Ranlett's The Architect (New York, 1847), which had been illustrated in January 1850, issue of Godey's Lady's Book. It is an unusual adaptation of a Greek cross to a private dwelling.

Having completed the house, the builders Conrad and Williams were paid \$10,430.31 on November 30, 1855. Two years later Columbia Stuart Hairston died, leaving two young children. In 1859 Peter Hairston married Fanny Caldwell of Salisbury. By 1860 Hairston owned 193 slaves accommodated in twenty-three slave houses. His estate consisted of 1,500 acres under cultivation and 1,900 unimproved, worth \$75,000, according to the United States Census. His livestock was valued at \$4,768, and there were 60,000 pounds of tobacco on the plantation, indicating that this was the principal crop.

With the coming of the Civil War, Peter Hairston went to serve on the staff of his brother-in-law, the then Colonel J. E. B. Stuart. Later he served under Jubal A. Early. After the Civil War the Hairstons moved to Baltimore and, except

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The rear entrance in the center of the east facade is identical to the main one. A simpler three-bay one-story porch protects this entrance. It has simple posts, square in section, which support a plain frieze, a molded cornice, and a low hip roof. Stone basement steps descend against the foundation within the north bay of the porch, which is not floored. An enclosed square one-story sun porch was originally located in both the north and south angles of the structure. The south porch, lined with twelve-over-twelve sash windows, is intact, but the north porch has been remodelled as a kitchen, with an additional frame room constructed to the north. The only other alteration of the original structure was the addition of a bath above the northeast bay window.

The elegantly finished interior of Cooleemee Plantation, implied by the monumentality of its exterior design, exists in its original state. The distribution of interior space is obvious from the massing of the structure. The central core, which contains the stair that spirals to the cupola, is especially impressive. As described in a 1911 novel, The Wargrave Trust,

This great central hall, open to the roof of the house, was fine in space and architectural proportion as anything of its kind...and the sweep of the noble staircase, as it circled the picture-hung walls and climbed upward to a turret on the roof, was a delight to the eye.

At both levels of each wing a single room opens off the stair hall. Each first-floor room is finished with plaster walls, wide molded baseboards, heavy plaster cornices, elaborate architraves, and decorative door lintels. Each door contains four flat panels.

At the first level of the octagonal central stair hall, each door is surrounded by a wide molded frame with bead-and-reel enrichment on the back band and is topped by an overdoor with a plain frieze and a simple cornice ornamented by a rope molding, the whole being surmounted by a freestanding Greek wave cresting enriched with acanthus and rosettes. The wide plaster ceiling cornice has a lower leaf-and-tongue molding and an egg-and-dart molding at the top. The open string of the stair, ornamented with large plaster foliate relief brackets, and the plaster soffit contrast strikingly with the mahogany stair balustrade, composed of tall turned balusters and a continuously winding molded handrail.

The northwest room, the dining room, is finished like the central hall, with the same door treatment. Identical frames surround the triple windows of the bay, with a flat panel beneath each window. Heavy fluted Ionic columns like those of

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the entrance porch support an entablature with a wide architrave, frieze, and molded cornice which spans the bay opening. The Victorian mantel in this room was added at a later date,

The southwest room, the drawing room (or parlor), is finished in manner identical to the stair hall and dining room, with the exception of the over-doors which are similar but simpler. The window reveals, however, are splayed. The columnar screen which separates the bay from the room itself is identical. The wide marble mantel against the inner wall consists of flanking Doric pilasters, each containing a single flat panel with an inverted palmette at the top, which support a molded frieze and a wide molded shelf.

The southeast room, the library, is finished like the other first-floor rooms with the exception of the plaster ceiling cornice. At the top of the wall is a band of alternating anthemions and palmettes. Around the edge of the ceiling runs a series of flat panels which are in turn bordered on their outer edge by a leaf-and-tongue molding. In this room the pine woodwork is stained to simulate golden oak. The Victorian mantel in this chamber is also a later addition. In the bay window are two framed pages from Godey's Lady's Book (January 1850), showing the elevation and plans for the house.

The northeast room, which now serves as a bedchamber, is less elaborate: the overdoor is more modest, lacking the Greek wave border, and there is no ceiling cornice. The wide wooden secondary mantel has chamfered pilasters with simple Doric caps, a plain frieze slightly arched at its lower edge, and a wide unmolded shelf.

The second story of Cooleemee is finished elaborately but more simply than the first story, with plaster walls, smaller molded baseboards and architraves, and no door entablatures. The ceiling cornice in the central stair hall is identical to that of the first floor, and each segment of the stair soffit at this level contains a flat panel. Triple windows surrounded by wide molded architraves illuminate this core space on the east and west sides. The doors which open into the bedchambers are identical to those of the first story and are surrounded by an architrave identical to that of the windows at this level. Each bedchamber is finished like the second-story stair hall, with identical baseboards and architraves, but lacks a cornice. A wide, low wooden mantel, identical to the mantel in the northeast wing of the first story, is centered on the inner wall of each bedchamber. The bedchamber in the northeast wing has been partitioned into a smaller bedroom with a side hall leading to a bath which was constructed above the first-floor bay window.

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Above the second story, the central stair spirals into the cupola which was intended for use as an observatory and has in each face a round-headed window with a traceried upper sash, set in a plain frame. Each room in the full basement is finished with plastered partition walls and wood trim and illuminated either by wood grates or six-over-six pane sash windows.

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for occasional visits to Cooleemee, lived in Baltimore until 1887 when Major Peter Hairston died. The Hairston family then returned to Cooleemee to live. The plantation has remained in the family and is now owned by Peter Hairston III. The house contains a fine collection of eighteenth and nineteenth century furniture, lamps, china, paintings, etc.--some brought by the first Peter Hairston from Virginia, some ordered in 1855 by the builder of the house. Records concerning the Hairston family, the construction of the house, and the origins of many of the furnishings are kept at Cooleemee.

In the early twentieth century, Cooleemee served as the background for a novel, The Wargrave Trust, by Christian Reid. Christian Reid was the pseudonym of Frances Fisher Tiernan (1846-1920), a Salisbury woman who wrote over forty novels, most of them in the romantic Victorian tradition; Richard Walser in Literary North Carolina described her as "the most outstanding North Carolina writer in this genre." Under the name "Hillcrest," Cooleemee is vividly described in The Wargrave Trust, a romantic melodrama: the plot revolves around the efforts of the Wargraves (whose history somewhat parallels the Hairstons, including the postwar departure to Baltimore) to keep up the unbroken traditions regarding the mansion despite family problems and the changes of the early twentieth century.

Cooleemee Plantation is monumental example of the villas made popular in the United States through style books during the 1850s. The presence of this sophisticated villa in piedmont North Carolina is unusual, for the builders of major country residences in the state during this period were still wedded to the more conventional essays in the Greek Revival mode. The expansive plan of Cooleemee and its emphatic three-dimensionality (presenting equally pleasing elevations on all four sides), make it especially suitable for its rural hilltop site. Because of the cosmopolitan taste of Peter and Columbia Hairston, Cooleemee Plantation, with its geometric massing, magnificent interior spaces, and elegant combination of Greek Revival and Italianate detail, is a uniquely significant representative of a full-blown villa in mid-nineteenth century North Carolina.

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Clark, Walter., ed. The State Records of North Carolina. Winston, North Carolina: M. I. and J. C. Stewart, 1896.

Davie County Records, Davie County Courthouse, Mocksville, North Carolina, Office of the Register of Deeds (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).

Davie County Records, State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).

Hairston family papers, private collection. Original in Hairston Collection at Cooleemee Plantation, Route 2, Mocksville, North Carolina; copy in Archives, State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina, 1967.

Tiernan, Frances C. F. (Christian Reid, pseud.). The Wargrave Trust. New York, Cincinnati, Chicago: Benziger Brothers, 1911.

Walser, Richard. Literary North Carolina. Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1970.