

**United States Department of the Interior
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet**

**Batts House and Outbuildings
Edgecombe County, NC**

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Narrative Description

The ca. 1880 Dr. Dempsey Bryan Batts House is located about seven miles north of Tarboro, the county seat of Edgecombe County, on the east side of US Highway 258, in a largely rural section of the county. The Dr. Batts House sits on a 2.44-acre parcel carved out of a 458-acre tract of farmland. The nomination includes four contributing outbuildings, two non-contributing outbuildings, one contributing structure, one non-contributing structure, and one contributing site in addition to the Dr. Batts House. Situated in the inner coastal plain of northeastern North Carolina, Edgecombe County offered its early inhabitants a well-forested terrain sloping gently toward the Atlantic Ocean. The area is well drained by the Tar River and its tributaries, leaving little lowland or marsh. The county is bounded on the north by Halifax County, on the northeast by Martin County, on the southeast by Pitt County, on the southwest by Wilson County and on the west by Nash County.

The two-story frame Italianate-style house sits about one-tenth mile back from the road, facing west. A U-shaped gravel driveway, lined with mature crepe myrtles and beech trees, wraps around the back of the house and exits back to the road. Three majestic magnolia trees are clustered near the front of the house. In addition, numerous mature deciduous and evergreen trees and ornamental shrubs enhance the property. Contemporary outbuildings associated with the Dr. Batts House include a one-story frame doctor's office and a small dairy. Earlier outbuildings include a log smokehouse and wood shed, both in fairly good condition, and a dilapidated corn barn, all dating to the early nineteenth century. An early-twentieth-century carriage house, later converted to a garage, sits behind the house as does a mid-twentieth-century metal storage shed. A family cemetery containing approximately eighteen graves and head stones is located about fifty feet southeast of the residence.

The 458-acre property borders the Tar River to the west and at one time bordered Deep Creek to the east. Approximately 100 acres of the land is in cultivation and about 325 acres are in woods. The nomination includes the Dr. Batts House, the associated outbuildings surrounding the house, and 2.44 acres that have been set aside as a yard.

Inventory List

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|--------------------|----------|-----------------------|
| 1. Dr. Batts House | ca. 1880 | Contributing Building |
|--------------------|----------|-----------------------|

The Dr. Batts House is an intact example of an Italianate-style house built to replace an early nineteenth-century Federal-era house that had been destroyed by fire. Facing west, the T-shaped, two-story frame house with a one-story rear kitchen/dining ell sits on brick piers infilled with a brick foundation. Weatherboard siding, slender corner boards, molded window surrounds, a handsome bay window, and a spacious wraparound porch with a flat, patterned balustrade

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distinguish the exterior of the house. The main block of the house features a gabled roof with overhanging eaves and cornice returns. The original metal roof has been replaced with a composition shingle roof. Two interior chimneys with corbeled rims pierce the gable roof.

The façade is three bays wide with the leg of the “T” stepped back from the projecting gable-front bar. A three-sided bay window with a hipped roof and single one-over-one window on each side and double two-over-two windows on the front is centered on the north-side projecting ell of the façade with a six-over-six double-hung sash window centered at the second level.

A porch that wraps around the south side of the house protects the front door. The porch originally wrapped around three sides of the south-side wing, but the rear portion was enclosed in ca. 1912. The wraparound porch is supported by square chamfered posts with post caps and enclosed by a decorative sawn balustrade and a molded handrail.

The four-panel front door features arched panels on the exterior and is framed by sidelights and a transom filled with the original yellow stained glass with decorative etching. The door also retains the original turn-key door ringer and porcelain doorknob, hardware, box lock, and key. The nine-over-six window centered south of the door reaches to the floor and is embellished with decorative brackets, and framed with shutters. Two windows at the second level of the facade are symmetrically placed over the first level fenestration, while a third second-story window is situated on the south flanking wall of the projecting gable-front ell. All the windows of the main block of the house with the exception of the front bay window and the first-story façade window have six-over-six double-hung sash. The windows on the façade and the north- and south-side elevations feature pointed, molded crowns.

The south elevation of the main block of the house includes a single window centered at both the first and second levels. A four-panel door with sidelights and transom opens from the porch into the enclosed porch, now a rear hall, connecting the main block of the house to the dining/kitchen ell. The north elevation includes two windows at both the first and second levels, symmetrically arranged. The rear (east) elevation has a window centered at the first and second levels on the gabled, projecting ell and two windows at the second level on the south-side wing. A door with sidelights and transom, formerly located at the rear (east) elevation of the main block of the house, opposite the front door, was moved when the porch was enclosed and now opens into the rear hall. The enclosed porch (rear hall) is covered with a shed roof.

The one-story rear ell consists of a dining room, an enclosed breezeway, and a formerly detached kitchen. The dining room has a gently-pitched gable roof and is attached to the main block of the house by the enclosed porch. There is a single six-over-six sash window centered on the north- and south-side elevations. An enclosed breezeway, currently utilized as a pantry, is accessed from the exterior by a single-leaf door with five horizontal panels positioned on the

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south elevation. The pantry includes two small six-pane windows, one located west of the door on the south elevation and one directly opposite it on the north elevation. The breezeway is covered with a shed roof, sloping to the east.

The formerly detached kitchen was connected to the dining room when the breezeway was enclosed. The kitchen has a side-gable roof with a chimney piercing the west slope of the roof. A single six-over-six sash window is centered on both the north- and south- side elevations.

The interior of the main block of the house includes six rooms, three downstairs and three upstairs, and a wide central hall. The interior is defined by twelve-foot ceilings, pine floors, plaster walls, high baseboards, four-panel doors with original porcelain knobs and hardware, a fireplace in each room with simple classical mantels, and decorative painting on some of the doors, baseboards, and mantels. The front door opens to the central hall with a winding cantilevered staircase rising along the south wall of the hall. The staircase features a turned newel and balusters and a small closet under the steps. A decorative Victorian hall screen is positioned across the top of the door opening at the back of the central hall dividing the front hall from the enclosed rear hall. A sitting room (formerly a bedroom) is located on the south side of the central hall. The room includes a front window that reaches to the floor, a side window with a paneled apron, and a fireplace with a simple post-and-lintel mantel with a peaked frieze. A closet is located to the right (east) of the mantel. The door to the closet was painted to look like wood grain.

A formal parlor is located in the front room on the north side of the central hall. A front alcove formed from the bay window is framed by an arched opening. The parlor's post-and-lintel mantel features the original marbelized painting as do the baseboards. A large built-in bookcase with upper glass doors is situated on the north side of the fireplace. A picture molding encircles the room about two feet below the ceiling. The parlor door has also been painted to resemble wood grain.

A downstairs bedroom is located on the north side of the central hall behind the parlor. The bedroom also has a post-and-lintel mantel with an adjacent closet. An upper and lower bathroom had been added to the back of the house sometime prior to World War I. Because they were uninhabitable in the winter and a continual source of leaks, the second floor one was removed in the 1960s and the first floor in the 1980s. They were replaced by small corner bathrooms in the downstairs and upstairs rear bedrooms.

The second floor has three bedrooms and a wide central hall. Each room has a simple mantel comprised of flanking pilasters with a wide frieze and a flat mantel shelf. The bedroom

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doors feature four raised panels on the exterior and flat panels on the interior, bedroom side. Each room also has a closet adjacent to the fireplace.

The downstairs rear hall can be accessed from the central hall or the sitting room. A door exiting to the wraparound porch is located on the south end of the hall. An additional door with sidelights and transom opens onto a small rear deck. The dining room is the same age as the house but was not connected until the rear portion of the porch was enclosed. A single door with a transom between the rear hall and the dining room was replaced in the 1970s with French doors. The roof chimney for a dining room stove was removed at the same time. The pine floor boards in the dining room are twenty feet long. A molded chair rail encircles the room.

Around the turn of the twentieth century the detached kitchen was added to the rear of the dining room by enclosing a breezeway to form a pantry and a laundry room. A four-panel door provides access to the pantry from the dining room. The pantry walls consist of the exterior weatherboards of the kitchen and dining room, while the ceiling is sheathed with tongue-and-groove beaded boards. An interior wall partitions off a small laundry room.

The kitchen retains the original beaded tongue-and-groove boards on all four walls and the ceiling and the original pine floors. A small wood stove sits near the center of the room connected to the chimney through the ceiling by a metal flue. The former wood cook stove has been replaced with a modern electric stove.

2. Doctor's Office

ca. 1880

Contributing Building

The Dr. Batts office is located approximately forty feet off the northwest corner of the main house in the front yard. The one-story, gable-front frame building measures approximately twelve feet by sixteen feet, five inches and faces south. An engaged front porch, supported by clustered slender posts at the corners, is enclosed by a machine-cut, flat, patterned balustrade. The office rests on a brick foundation and includes a storage room (cellar) underneath the building. The four-panel entrance door is centered on the south elevation, while six-over-six windows are centered on the east- and west-side elevations. A chimney with paved shoulders is centered on the north (rear) elevation. Weatherboard siding covers the building, while the replacement roof is comprised of composition shingles. Plaster covers the interior walls. The fireplace mantel is similar to those in the main house with two flat pilasters supporting a wide flat frieze and a narrow mantel shelf. The office, previously located on the north side of the farm lane, now the north driveway, was moved to its current location ca. 1912. The basement it sits on was excavated for a gasoline powered water pump and storage tank which still remains in the room.

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3. Dairy ca. 1880 Contributing Structure

The small dairy sits about twelve feet east of the rear kitchen ell. The gable-roofed dairy measures approximately eight feet, three inches by six feet, three inches and is clad with weatherboards. It has a metal roof with cornice returns and a wide overhang. Louvered vents are centered in the gable ends, while small doors are centered on the side elevation. A zinc tray in which water was placed, used to cool milk and butter, slides under one of the vents. A hand pump is situated adjacent to the dairy.

4. Smokehouse ca. 1810 Contributing Building

The one-story, gable-front smokehouse is comprised of one-foot-wide sawn cypress planks laid horizontally with full dovetail notching at the corners. A small door opening is centered on the south elevation. The building has recently been restored with the addition of new roof rafters and a standing-seam metal roof and new weatherboards in the gable. The smokehouse sits directly on the ground with no foundation. The building measures twelve feet by sixteen feet and is situated on the north side of the driveway approximately forty-eight feet northeast of the doctor's office and about thirty-six feet north of the house.

5. Wood Shed ca. 1810 Contributing Building

The one-story, gable-front wood shed is aligned with and about ten feet east of the smokehouse. The building is somewhat smaller than the smokehouse, measuring nine feet, ten inches by ten feet, nine inches. Similar in shape and construction materials to the smokehouse, the wood shed also features one-foot-wide sawn cypress planks with full dovetail corner notching. The gable is sheathed with weatherboards, while wood shingles cover the roof. The wood shed sits directly on the ground with no foundation. The building is in a deteriorated condition.

6. Corn Barn ca. 1810 Contributing Building

The corn barn is situated east of the wood shed and measures approximately twelve feet by sixteen feet. The corn barn also features one-foot-wide sawn cypress planks with dovetail notching. The gable-front building with a gable overhang has a standing-seam-metal roof laid over horizontal boards. The gables are sheathed with weatherboard. The corn barn sits directly on the ground with no foundation. The building is in a very deteriorated condition.

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7. Carriage House/Garage 1912 Noncontributing Building

The carriage house/garage sits approximately seventy feet behind the house, facing west, and measures twenty by twenty feet. The frame building features a pyramidal standing-seam-metal roof with exposed rafter tails and weatherboard siding. Two sets of double-leaf doors on the west elevation, each with three panes of vertical glass, provide access to the building. The east elevation includes two four-over-four double-hung sash windows.

8. Storage Shed ca. 1950 Noncontributing Building

The storage shed sits approximately fifty feet south of the garage and measures thirty feet by twenty feet. The building has a side-gable, metal roof and corrugated metal siding. A frame equipment shed with lattice siding is attached to the building's north elevation.

9. Pump House ca. 1970 Noncontributing Structure

The pump house sits about nine feet behind the wood shed. The small structure consists of plywood siding and a metal shed roof.

10. Cemetery ca. 1808-1985 Contributing Site

The family cemetery is situated about fifty feet southeast of the house and is enclosed by a decorative wrought iron fence. The site includes approximately eighteen graves, most of which are marked by a tombstone. The oldest grave is for Isaac F. Batts who was born in 1782 and died on January 24, 1808, at the age of 26. His wife, Lucy (b. February 14, 1782, d. July 2, 1867) is buried next to him. Additional graves include many of the Batts family members including that of Civil War soldier Benjamin Coffield Batts (b. February 25, 1844, d. September 24, 1861), who died at Yorktown. An obelisk marks his grave. Another Civil War soldier buried in the cemetery, James A. Barlow (b. September 8, 1833, d. May 31, 1862), is a cousin of the Batts family. The tombstone reveals he fell on the battlefield of Seven Pines at the age of 29 years, 5 months, and 3 days. Dr. Dempsey Bryan Batts, M.D. (b. December 15, 1839, d. July 19, 1885) and his wife Peninah Lawrence Batts (b. December 17, 1841, d. June 25, 1886) are also buried in the cemetery as is their son Dempsey Bryan Batts and his wife Katherine Helene Galloway Batts, and their granddaughter Katherine Batts Salley and her husband, William Callier Salley.

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Statement of Significance

The ca. 1880 Batts House is eligible for National Register listing under Criterion C for architecture. The period of significance is limited to ca. 1880, the approximate construction date of the house. The two-story frame Italianate-style farmhouse was built for Dr. Dempsey Bryan Batts to replace an earlier Federal-era house that had been destroyed by fire. The exterior of the T-shaped house is embellished with Italianate details including a front door with arched panels, a three-sided bay window, and molded crowns over the windows. The asymmetrical house plan includes a wide central hall with a graceful curvilinear staircase and a Victorian hall screen. Marbelized painting and decorative grain-painted woodwork survive on the interior doors, mantels, and baseboards. Simple Italianate-style post-and-lintel mantels are found in each of the rooms of the main block of the house. A former free-standing kitchen and dining room, contemporary with the house, were attached in the early twentieth-century by enclosing a portion of a wraparound porch and a breezeway. In addition, a rare one-story frame doctor's office and a small diary, both dating to ca. 1880, are included with the nomination. The Dr. Batts House is one of Edgecombe County's most intact late-nineteenth-century rural farm houses and an excellent example of the Italianate style popular with prosperous farmers and merchants during the post Civil War era.

The nomination also includes three ca. 1810 outbuildings: a smokehouse, a woodshed, and a corn barn. The outbuildings are eligible for National Register listing under Criterion C for architecture. The period of significance is limited to ca. 1810, the approximate date of construction of the buildings. Becoming increasingly rare in eastern North Carolina, plank buildings were constructed with sawn planks laid horizontally and dovetailed together. The outbuildings on the Batts property were constructed with twelve-inch-wide cypress planks with full dovetail notching.

Section 8 – Historical Background

The first permanent European settlements appeared around the Tar River in eastern North Carolina in the early 1730s. The eastern and southern areas were first settled along Otters Creek. Edgecombe County was formed in 1732 from Bertie County by proclamation of Governor George Barrington, honoring a petition from residents of Bertie County on the south side of the Roanoke River and Fishing Creek. The assembly, however, did not confirm its creation until 1740 at which time Edgecombe became the fourteenth county of the colony. Granville (1746), Halifax (1758), Nash (1777), and a part of Wilson (1855) counties were formed from Edgecombe County. The county was named for Richard Edgecombe, who became Baron Edgecombe, an English nobleman. Tarboro was incorporated in 1760 and replaced Edgecombe Court House as the county seat in 1764 (Watson, pp 1-2).

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Benjamin Batts was born in Surry County, Virginia, in ca. 1747, the son of William and Hulda Batts. Land records indicate that William and Hulda had moved to Edgecombe County by 1755. The couple had four children: Benjamin, Joseph, Winifred, and John. In 1759, Hulda Batts petitioned the courts for administration of the estate of her deceased husband. The following year Joseph Hart was appointed guardian to the four orphans of William Batts; and in 1768, the courts ordered the division of the estate of William Batts among his four children (Dorman, pp. 13-32).

Benjamin Batts married Mildred Lawrence and the couple had two children, daughter Polly and son Isaac (b. 1782). From 1768 to 1782 Benjamin was involved in numerous land transactions and began compiling a large estate. On May 28, 1782, for 5000 pounds, Thomas Wells sold 227 acres to Benjamin Batts bordering the south side of Deep Creek, together with all houses, orchards, gardens, fences and timbers (Deed Book E, p. 258). In November, 1785, Benjamin was appointed a commissioner for "letting the building of a new bridge over Deep Creek" along with John Dolvin and Peter Knight. Benjamin Batts also was appointed a juror, a patroller, and an assessor for the county numerous times throughout the last two decades of the eighteenth century (Dorman, pp. 55-219).

By 1790, the population of Edgecombe County included 1,659 males over sixteen and 1,879 males under sixteen, 4,395 females, 3,152 slaves and 70 free persons of color. The 1790 census included 95 names around Fishing Creek, north of Tarboro in the vicinity of the Batts plantations. Farms were generally self-sufficient, with the early inhabitants producing most of their basic needs. Wheat, corn, and tobacco constituted the major agricultural crops of the county. In addition, cotton, flax, and fruit proved to be excellent staple crops. Most households also owned varying numbers of horses, cattle, hogs, and sheep. Many farms were dependent on slave labor (Watson, p. 20).

Benjamin Batts died in 1807, leaving part of his estate to his son Isaac. His will dating from November, 1807, bequeaths to his son, Isaac Batts "all the land bought from Thomas Wells with one-half place known as Crocker's Hole (marling ground), along with four negroes, and \$200.00 cash. Also lend use of "seine place" (a hole in the Tar River for catching fish) belonging to plantation whereon he lives." His daughter, Polly, received "the land and plantation where he now lives, along with household and kitchen furniture, produce, four negroes and \$200.00" (Will Book D, p. 290).

Isaac Batts married Lucy Knight (b. February 14, 1782, d. July 2, 1867). They had two children: son Benjamin (b. November 26, 1803) and daughter Mildred (b. January 15, 1805). Mildred married John Lawrence (b. September 7, 1804). On June 4, 1805, David Lawrence sold an additional 200 acres on the north side of the Tar River to Isaac Batts for 350 pounds. Isaac died on January 24, 1808 at the age of twenty-six, leaving Lucy with two young children. A

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deed dated March 10, 1808, recorded that the Sheriff of Edgecombe County allotted to the widow of Isaac Batts her dower of lands which were comprised of 227 acres along Deep Creek, "as she now lives on part of the Wills plantation." Lucy lived on this land until her death in 1867 (Batts Family Papers).

Benjamin, the son of Isaac and Lucy Batts, married Lucy L. Bryan (b. March 1803, d. May 9, 1875), daughter of Dempsey and Mary Bryan, on May 25, 1824. The offspring of Benjamin and Lucy included Mary Elizabeth (b. November 19, 1826), Margaret (b. September 1, 1828), Isaac Benjamin Franklin (b. June 23, 1833), Emily Lee (b. April 19, 1835), Dempsey Bryan (b. December 5, 1839), and Benjamin Coffield (b. February 25, 1843). Benjamin greatly increased the size of the plantation. On September 19, 1820, he purchased 150 acres along Deep Creek for \$750.00 from Joseph Edmondson. On November 30, 1824, his brother-in-law John Lawrence sold to Benjamin Batts for 5000 pounds the dividing lands of Isaac Batts (deceased). He agreed to give Benjamin the plantation where "his mother lives, including all houses, orchards, gardens, fences, etc." In addition, on September 10, 1830, his father-in-law, Dempsey Bryan, sold him 180 acres on the north side of Deep Creek. On June 1, 1837, he acquired another 118 ¼ acres on the south side of Deep Creek from Peter Knight for \$503.00 and on November 19, 1850, D. M. Foreman sold him 503 acres on the north side of the Tar River for \$800.00 (Batts Family Papers).

The 1850 Federal census listed Benjamin Batts, age 46, as a farmer with \$6,000 valued in real estate. It revealed that he was living with his wife, Lucy, age 46, and his mother, Lucy, age 68, along with Zilphia Savage, age 50, Nancy Bryant, age 28, and William Faithful, age 26. The children were listed separately: Isaac B. F. Batts (age 17, farmer), Emily L. (age 14), D. B. (Dempsey Bryan, age 11), and B. C. (Benjamin Coffield, age 6). He owned twenty male slaves and twelve female slaves. His land included 425 improved acres and 700 unimproved acres. He owned \$250 worth of farm implements, seven horses, three mules, five cows, four ox, fifteen cattle, seventy-five sheep, and two-hundred swine for a total value of \$1200. The plantation produced 120 bushels of wheat, 40 bushels of rye, 3050 bushels of corn, 200 bushels of oats, 200 pounds of rice, 10 bales of cotton (400 pounds each), 400 bushels of peas, 50 bushels of potatoes, 300 bushels of sweet potatoes, 250 pounds of butter, and 25 tons of hay. They also itemized \$50.00 worth of homemade items and \$650 from the slaughter of farm animals.

In a will made out in 1859, Benjamin Batts bequeathed his wife Lucy the tract of land where he now resides, known as Piney Woods Place, containing 234 acres. In addition he devised her one tract lying on the north side of Deep Creek comprising 180 acres and one tract on both sides of Deep Crrek containing 140 acres, along with twenty-one slaves and their increase, a dwelling house, furniture, utensils, a buggy and harness, three horses, two cows, four sows and pigs, twenty sheep, one cart and a liberal allowance for her support. He also gave to each of his daughters - Mary Long, Margaret Staton, and Emily Batts - six slaves, one bureau

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and one feather bed. To his three sons, Isaac, Dempsey Bryan, and Benjamin Coffield, he bequeathed “the land inherited from his father amounting to about 505 acres, plus 118 acres, plus 502 acres, plus eleven slaves and their increase, with the land and slaves to be equally divided.” He also gave them the land bequeathed to his wife upon her death to be equally divided along with her slaves (Will Book G, p. 188). A death notice in a Tarboro newspaper stated that Benjamin Batts died on April 18, 1860 of “disease of the heart” and was buried on April 19th with Masonic ceremonies by Concord Lodge No. 58. It continued: “Mr. Batts was highly esteemed and respected and has left a large circle of relatives and friends to mourn his loss” (Johnston, p. 5). His wife, Lucy died on May 9, 1875.

Edgecombe County remained a predominately agricultural society through the first half of the nineteenth century and remained dependent on slave labor to farm the larger plantations. Constituting thirty-one percent of the inhabitants of the county in 1790, bondsmen continually increased in number until they represented a majority in 1850. The 1860 census revealed that three of every five persons in the county were of African descent and that Edgecombe was one of only five counties in the state with more than 10,000 slaves. The average number of slaves per family rose from 6.5 in 1790 to 15 in 1860 (Watson, p. 62).

Dempsey Bryan Batts (b. December 5, 1839) inherited a good portion of the plantation as a result of his father’s will. He married Mary Peninah Lawrence Bryan (b. December 17, 1841) on October 6, 1863. The couple had five children: Lena Lee (b. October 5, 1866), Lucy Bryan (b. October 5, 1866), Sallie Hill (b. May 3, 1868), Dempsey Bryan Jr. (b. July 10, 1872), and Henry Thompson (b. August 28, 1875). Lucy and Sallie Batts died as infants. Dempsey Bryan Batts, Sr., became a medical doctor and a justice of the peace. After the ca. 1806 family house burned in 1880, Dr. Batts built a new house on the property and included a separate doctor’s office for himself (Salley interview).

The plantation continued to be worked by slaves until after the Civil War when the tenancy system took over. Dr. Batts died on July 19, 1885. His will, dated February 6, 1872, devised to his wife, Peninah Lawrence Batts, “all the ornaments of her person and any jewels, plates, linen, and china and all household goods and furniture; also all horses, mules, hogs, cattle, carts, carriages, implements, and husbandry provisions. However, if she remarried, all possessions must be sold and divided equally among her and the children.” He also devised to his wife all the real estate so long as she remained a widow. If she remarried then she retained one-third of the land for her natural life (Will Book H, p. 18). Peninah died the year after her husband on June 25, 1886. Their daughter, Lena, married the following year and went to live in Norfolk. Henry was ten years old and Dempsey Bryan was fourteen years old when their mother died. The boys were sent to live with relatives, while Captain Long, an uncle, managed the farm until they came of age (Salley interview, February 23, 2005).

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On October 24, 1893, J. R. Baxter and his wife Lena, sold 742 acres for \$750.00 to her brother, Dempsey Bryan Batts Jr., which was one-third interest in the land which she had inherited from her father (Batts Family Papers). Dempsey Bryan Batts Jr. married Katherine Helene Galloway (b. October 24, 1872) on February 16, 1899. The couple had two children: Katherine Galloway Batts (b. May 25, 1900) and Dempsey Bryan Batts III, (b. May 24, 1901). In a Special Proceedings dated August 24, 1899, a petition for the partition of the Batts land resulted in Dempsey Bryan Batts Jr. being awarded 448 3/10 acres adjacent to the Tar River (Lot #1) and Henry T. Batts receiving 377 7/10 acres adjacent to Deep Creek (Lot #2) (Special Proceedings Book 2, p. 332). Dempsey Bryan Jr. died on March 21, 1901, while Henry died the following year on July 10, 1902 (Salley interview, February 23, 2005).

Katherine Galloway Batts was a widow at the age of 29 with an infant and a one-year-old child. Her son, Dempsey Bryan Batts III, died six months after his father at the age of four months. Dempsey Bryan Batts Jr. died intestate and as a result on April 9, 1901, Katherine Batts petitioned the court that her late husband's land including 448 3/10 acres plus a 7-acre right-of-way be assigned to her, including the dwelling house and all outhouses and improvements. On April 22, 1901, she was granted a writ of dower which included 75 acres and the dwelling house, out houses and buildings, while the remainder was granted to E. V. Zoeller, guardian ad litem of the infant, Katherine Batts (Special Proceedings Book 2, p. 452). Katherine raised her daughter by herself and managed the farm for the next forty-five years. The acreage was farmed by tenant farmers and crops included tobacco, corn, soybeans, peanuts, cotton, and timber (Salley interview, February 23, 2005).

Katherine Batts married William Callier Salley on June 14, 1930 and moved to Norfolk, Virginia. She and William had one child, George Callier Salley (b. February 1, 1933). Upon the death of her mother on November 26, 1945, Katherine became sole owner of the Batts farm. Katherine and her husband, William, never came back to live on the farm. A succession of tenant farmers lived on the farm and in the main residence between 1945 and 1972 (Salley interview, February 23, 2005).

Katherine's son, George, married Betty Atkeson (b. August 23, 1938) on August 24, 1957. Betty's brother, John Conner Atkeson Jr., moved into the Dr. Batts family home in 1972 and lived there until 1992, while teaching history at East Carolina University. William Callier Salley died on August 16, 1984 and his wife, Katherine Batts Salley died on March 17, 1985. Their son, George Callier Salley, inherited the property and has made it his home since 1992. He and his wife have three grown children. The remaining acreage associated with the Batts House and Outbuildings includes 116 acres under cultivation and 325 acres in woods, much of it tidal, swampy wetlands (Salley interview, February 23, 2005). The house and outbuildings sit on a separate 2.5-acre parcel.

Architecture Context – Italianate Dwelling – Edgecombe County

Although the popularity of the Greek Revival style in northeastern North Carolina waned after the conclusion of the Civil War, elements of the style would remain popular until the early twentieth century, often reflected by simple Greek Revival interior finishes and the continuation of styles based on classical elements. The traditional I-house with a center hall flanked by two rooms, popular throughout the nineteenth century in northeastern North Carolina, began to give way to a somewhat more complex plan. Although the inclusion of a central hall remained popular, builders began incorporating a front or rear ell or both, approximating a T- or L-shaped configuration. Balloon framing also began to replace the heavy timber-braced framing extensively used during the antebellum period (Power, p. 118).

After the Civil War, houses in the region began reflecting the influence of the Gothic Revival and Italianate styles, both of which originated with the English Picturesque Movement, allowing a freedom of design not permitted by the more formal classical ideals in architecture. Both one- and two-story versions often included embellishment with lathed and jigsawed millwork, including porches lavishly decorated with cutout balustrades and intricate sawnwork. It became common for wealthy merchants and professionals to build traditional forms overlaid with characteristic Italianate elements including brackets along broad eaves, large porches with chamfered posts and curvilinear braces, round-arched double-entry doors, and tall, paired windows (Mattson, p 20).

The ca. 1880 Dr. Batts House illustrates a vernacular interpretation of the Italianate style. The asymmetrical T-shaped plan includes a wide central hall with a curvilinear staircase flanked by two rooms on one side and one room on the other side. The exterior of the house is embellished with Italianate details including a front door with arched panels, a three-sided bay window, a front window that reaches to the floor, and molded crowns over the windows. A wide wraparound porch is enclosed with a decorative, sawn balustrade and supported by chamfered porch posts with column caps. On the interior, the central hall is distinguished by a curved stairway with slender turned balusters and a decorative lathe-turned newel and an elaborate hall screen. Much of the interior woodwork is grain-painted and the living room mantel and floorboards retain the original marbleized painting. A broad arch frames the front bay window in the living room. The free-standing kitchen and dining room have since been attached forming a rear one-story ell.

Remnants of earlier elements can be detected in gabled cornice returns, six-over-six sash windows, and sidelights and transom framing the doors. The interior of the house displays simple Italianate mantels with pilaster and frieze design. The first-floor mantels are illustrative of vernacular designs with heavily molded shelves and paneled friezes, while the second-floor mantels are plain pilaster and frieze types. Four-paneled doors are found throughout the house,

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with the second floor-doors displaying raised panels on the hall side and flat panels on the bedroom side.

Although a comprehensive survey of Edgecombe County has not been conducted, the Dr. Batts House is among a fairly small group of fashionable houses built in the region's rural areas during the last several decades of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century. The ca. 1880s Thomas Pimento Braswell House in adjacent Nash County includes Italianate elements. In this case, the plan is a more traditional I-house with a projecting central pavilion. The porch is similar to the Dr. Batts House, however, with its chamfered posts with column caps and a cutout balustrade. The interior is fitted with relatively simple mantels with arched openings, while the central hall features a curved staircase with slender balusters and a heavy chamfered newel (Mattson, p. 260).

The ca. 1890 William H. Daniel House in Martin County has the same T-plan with a wide wraparound porch as the Dr. Batts House. It also includes roof gables with pronounced cornice returns and narrow cornerboards. The Daniel House displays two-over-two window sash, however, a more popular window rendition of Italianate houses. Like the Dr. Batts House, the interior includes a center-hall plan with a staircase with turned balusters (Butchko, p. 190).

The ca. 1886 Dr. Benjamin Long House, another Martin County residence, also displays an asymmetrical T-plan decorated with an abundance of sawn and turned decorations. Similarities to the Dr. Batts House include two interior chimneys, gabled cornice returns, a three-sided bay window on the front, and an elaborate wraparound porch with decorative elements. The interior also features painted and grained woodwork, louvered interior blinds, and a broad arch framing the front bay window, similar to the Batts House (Butchko, p. 226).

Nearby Pitt County also includes some excellent examples of Italianate-style houses. The ca. 1903 Theophilus Johnston Stancill House (no longer extant) conformed to the typical asymmetrical center-hall plan with a T-shaped configuration with a wraparound porch. The house had two interior chimneys, gabled cornice returns, and narrow cornerboards. Italianate elements included two-over-two windows and turned porch posts with sawn brackets and a spindlework frieze. The interior featured a center-hall stair and grain-painted woodwork (Power, p. 463).

The ca. 1900 Jesse Cannon House is another two-story asymmetrical center-hall plan farmhouse, again with two interior chimneys, and gabled cornice returns. This example includes robust ornamentation displayed on both the exterior and interior. Sawn brackets, a hallmark of the Italianate style, are found underneath the eaves, while the front porch features chamfered posts and sawn brackets. The interior has a well-executed center-hall stair, a turned newel, and

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turned balusters. Similar to the Dr. Batts House, the mantels display vernacular designs with heavily molded shelves and paneled friezes (Power, p. 327).

The Dr. Batts House, as well as the other houses discussed, reflected the owner's desire to incorporate new housing trends while not completely abandoning more familiar house forms. This was generally accomplished by sticking with the traditional center-hall plan, while modifying it somewhat with either a central pavilion or incorporating a front or rear ell or both. Fashionable Victorian or Italianate elements were added through the application of decorative sawn brackets, balustrades, or porch friezes. Occasionally two-over-two windows, arched paneled doors, and molded window crowns were incorporated in an attempt to replicate more formal high-style examples found in pattern books popular at the time. The Dr. Batts House remains one of Edgecombe County's most intact late-nineteenth-century rural farm houses and is a striking example of Italianate style popular with prosperous farmers and merchants during the post-Civil War era.

Architectural Context – Early-Nineteenth-Century Plank Outbuildings

A plank house is a type of log construction consisting of sawn planks or logs laid horizontally and notched at the corners. This method differed from other types of log construction in the amount of labor exerted in sawing logs into two- to twelve-inch wide, close fitting planks. Also known as sawed log houses, this construction method first appeared in the South in the late seventeenth century and was used for a variety of purposes. Because of the solidity and regularity achieved by this labor-intensive method of construction, buildings that required a measure of security, such as storehouses, smokehouses, and prisons were built in this manner. It was also a common method of house construction throughout the South in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Lounsbury, p 278).

There are three surviving early nineteenth-century plank outbuildings on the Batts property. The buildings are similar in size, shape, and construction materials. The smokehouse and corn barn both measure approximately twelve- by sixteen-feet, while the wood shed measures approximately ten by eleven feet. The gable-front outbuildings are sheathed with one-foot-wide cypress planks laid horizontally with full dovetail notching at the corners. The outbuildings sit on short fieldstone piers. Weatherboard is used in the gables and the roofs were originally clad with wood shingles.

Nineteenth-century plank buildings are becoming increasingly rare on the landscape of eastern North Carolina. The Boyette House (JT 5) in Johnston County, built in the first half of the eighteenth century, is a surviving one-room plank slave house built on the farm of George Boyette. The modest house displays the typical dovetailed joints at the corners. It also retains a surviving stick-and-mud chimney, one of only a handful in the state (Bishir, p. 387).

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Another rare surviving plank outbuilding can be found on the Heartsfield-Perry Farm in Wake County. A ca. 1840 plank smokehouse with an attached woodshed is among the numerous outbuildings associated with the farm. The dovetail plank structure has a wood foundation and six-inch exposed beaded siding over the dovetail planks. Exposed plank siding is visible on the interior (Keane, NR nomination, Section 7, page 5). Several additional samples of plank construction in eastern North Carolina have been moved to public sites at Hope Plantation in Bertie County and the John Wheeler House in Murfreesboro in Hertford County (Bishir, p. 16).