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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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Bracebridge Hall was originally a story-and-a-half, frame structure constructed about 1826. During the Greek Revival period a five-bay, two-story, frame mansion house was added perpendicular to its eastern end, shifting the axis from north-south to east-west. The central entrance consists of a eight panel door with sidelights, framed by pilasters with Greek key decoration. It is covered by an exceptionally well executed one-story pedimented porch featuring fluted Doric columns and a full entablature. The windows have nine-over-nine sash on the first story and nine-over-six on the second, all with moulded trim and corner blocks with roundels. At each end there is an exterior Flemish bond chimney. The simple box cornice is enriched by dentils.

In 1884 the original ca. 1826 section was raised to two stories. This wing includes two American bond chimneys on the west gable end, enclosed by a one-story lean-to addition. On the north side is a two-tier porch featuring chamfered columns on pedestals and balustrades in a decorative geometric pattern. At the same time a story-and-a-half brick addition laid in American bond was added to the south of any parallel to the 1826 structure. This made the house essentially a "U" plan.

The interiors of the oldest portion of Bracebridge Hall have been extensively altered. The fabric of the Greek Revival main block is almost unchanged. The first floor consists of a central hallway between the north and south parlors. The south parlor retains its original floral print wallpaper and carpet. The mantels in these rooms are similar to designs in Asher Benjamin's The Architect, or Practical House Carpenter. The mantel in the north parlor is framed by fluted pilasters and a Greek key motif across the frieze. The south mantel consists of fluted trim with large Greek key corner blocks and a recessed frieze with a plain central panel.

The house is set in a grove of beautiful deciduous trees and enclosed by a simple picket fence. The grounds include extensive informal gardens with unusually large crepe myrtles, and plantings of camellias, azaleas, English boxwoods, and toweing magnolias.

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Elias Carr purchased the property about 1814 and his son, Jonas, built the original section of Bracebridge Hall on the land about 1826. It was probably during Jonas' ownership that the house was enlarged and remodeled in the Greek Revival style. Jonas died in 1843 leaving the plantation to his sons, William and Elias. William removed to Warren County prior to the Civil War and sold his half-interest to Elias in 1862 for \$25,000. At this time the property produced 4,500 bushels of corn and 112,000 pounds of cotton. Elias Carr continued as a highly successful farmer during the Reconstruction years and aided in the organization of the North Carolina Farmers' Alliance, serving as one of its first presidents. In 1893 he was elected Governor of North Carolina as a compromise candidate for the farmers and Democrats. He also served simultaneously as the first president of the North Carolina Sons of the American Revolution. Governor Carr died in 1900 and willed "my residence in Edgecombe County, known as Bracebridge Hall" to his children. The house is presently owned by Mrs. Elias Carr, Jr., widow of the governor's son.

The house is of particular historical interest as the residence of Governor Elias Carr and as the meeting place for many prominent political and agricultural leaders during the second half of the nineteenth century.

Architecturally, Bracebridge Hall is a typical example of an early Greek Revival plantation house. Its one-story Doric porch is particularly fine. Shaded by a grove of large oaks and fronted by a wide lawn, Bracebridge Hall is one of the best preserved plantation complexes in eastern North Carolina.

Edgecombe County Records, Edgecombe County Courthouse, Tarboro, North Carolina, Office of the Register of Deeds. (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills, Estate Papers, Census Reports.)

Edgecombe County Records, State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina. (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills, Estate Papers, Census Reports.)

Turner, J. Kelly and Jonathan L. Bridgers. <u>History of Edgecombe County</u>, <u>North Carolina</u>. Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Printing Company, 1920.

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(July 1969)

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

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