

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Swansboro Historic District
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Historic downtown of Swansboro N/A not for publication
city, town Swansboro N/A vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Onslow code 133 zip code 28584

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>76</u>	<u>45</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>		sites
	<u>1</u>	structures
		objects
<u>77</u>	<u>46</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Historic and Architectural Resources of Onslow County, NC

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 2

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official William J. Finley

Date 2-5-90

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____

Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper _____

Date of Action _____



North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

James G. Martin, Governor
Patric Dorsey, Secretary

Division of Archives and History
William S. Price, Jr., Director

February 6, 1990

The Honorable W. E. "Bill" Russell, Mayor
Town of Swansboro
P. O. Box 368
Swansboro, N C 28584

Re: Swansboro Historic District, Swansboro

Dear Mayor Russell:

It is a pleasure to report that the above-referenced nomination to the National Register of Historic Places has been approved by the State Professional Review Committee for submission to the U. S. Department of the Interior. A copy of the completed nomination is enclosed.

When the property is approved by the Department of Interior for entry in the Register, a certificate will be sent to you. This will require approximately two to three months.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William S. Price, Jr." with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

William S. Price, Jr.
State Historic Preservation Officer

WSP,Jr./mlr

Enclosure

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Continuation Sheet Swansboro Historic District, Onslow County

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Swansboro and Richlands were connected to railroads and received many building materials from outside the area. Swansboro was never reached by railroad but it does have easy water access to southeastern Onslow County extensive pine forests.

DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE:

Fifty-five, or 71 percent, of Swansboro's contributing properties are domestic in character. Five of these houses were built before the Civil War; the rest were built between the late 1880s and 1925 - the period of Swansboro's lumber boom.

ANTEBELLUM HOUSES:

Swansboro's antebellum houses represent a range of styles and plan types. Two examples, the Jonathan Green House (Building Inventory Number 99) and the so-called Comfort House (No. 37), exhibit the coastal plain cottage form and have hall-parlor plans. The two-story double-pile Peter Ringware House (No. 36) has one large room on one side of a center hall and two smaller rooms on the other side. The Hawkins-Clark House (No. 87) was originally a two-story I house with a hall-parlor plan, but was changed shortly after it was built into a center-hall plan. The two-story Bazel Perkins House (No. 75) has an engaged two-tier front porch, a center hall, large front rooms, and smaller rear rooms - an arrangement similar to houses found in Beaufort (Suzanne Bishir, personal communication). These Swansboro houses display Georgian, Federal, and Greek-Revival stylistic features, and represent a much smaller, but equally important, architectural heritage as the antebellum housing stock of the nearby port town of Beaufort, with which Swansboro had economic ties.

A study of the 1850 census of population statistics for Swansboro suggests that the five dwellings represent the majority of the finer Swansboro houses built before the Civil War - a remarkable survival rate. Only the late eighteenth century Gibson House, the late antebellum Barnum House, and possibly one or two other fine houses have been lost. Less sophisticated early houses that have disappeared included the Harts-Heady House and the Lambertson House, both with the coastal plain cottage form. A considerable number of small frame dwellings built in the town before the Civil War may also have been typified by the coastal plain cottage form (see Onslow County Multiple Property Documentation Form: Vernacular Dwellings: Coastal Plain Cottage).

LUMBER BOOM HOUSES: 1880s-1925

Apparently few houses were built in Swansboro between the Civil War and the late 1880s, a period of economic stagnation in the town. The earliest houses associated with Swansboro's lumber boom, such as the George E. Bell House (No. 56) and the circa 1893 James Elijah Parkin House (No. 53), are characterized by flamboyant interior and exterior ornament. Houses from the later 1890s, the 1900s, and the 1910s exhibit a remarkable degree of ornamental similarity, likely evidence of the influence of the Swansboro Lumber Company Mill and its successor the Swansboro Land and Lumber Company. There is no evidence that the mills built these houses directly. Instead it appears that a coterie of independent carpenters made liberal use of stock moldings and ornament produced at the mills.

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling

Commerce: department store

Education: school

Religion: religious structure

Funerary: cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other: late Victorian millwork

Other: coastal plain cottage

Federal/Greek Revival

Bungalow

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling

Commerce: department store

Government: city hall

Commerce: restaurant

Religion: religious structure

Funerary: cemetery

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls wood

brick

roof asphalt

other concrete block

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

DESCRIPTION

The Swansboro Historic District incorporates most of the historic center of the small port town and includes 123 resources, mostly residential and commercial in character. The district is bounded by Highway 24 on the east, Walnut Street on the north, Broad Street on the west, and Water Street and the White Oak River on the south. One- and two-story frame dwellings and commercial buildings dating to the period 1890-1925 represent the majority of contributing properties in the district, with a scattering of earlier buildings. The town is situated on sloping ground which crests at twenty-five feet above sea-level along Walnut Street. The town faces the Atlantic Ocean across three-and-a-half miles of intervening salt marshes and barrier islands and is therefore exposed to breezes and occasional ocean storms. The land area of the downtown was appreciably increased by harbor dredging in the 1930s, which piled ballast stones and other spoil on the south side of Front Street. Of the resources in the district, 77, or approximately 63 percent, are contributing (76 buildings and one cemetery).

The architectural context for Swansboro's buildings are the following property types discussed in the Onslow County Multiple Property Documentation Form: Domestic Buildings, Commercial Buildings, and Religious and Educational Buildings. Swansboro's domestic and commercial architecture includes some of the earliest representatives of these building types in the county. The town's tiny sample of religious and educational buildings is not markedly different from similar buildings found elsewhere in the County.

Swansboro's small stock of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century housing is similar in form, plan, and style to antebellum houses built elsewhere in Onslow County. However, Swansboro's later domestic architecture is stylistically distinct from contemporaneous late nineteenth and early twentieth century housing built in other sections of Onslow County. This is probably a result of stock decorative elements produced at Swansboro's several lumber boom period mills, which appear only on a few houses outside Swansboro built principally in the Queens Creek and lower White Oak River drainages. Swansboro's later housing is characterized by the I house and gable-fronted side-hall plan forms, types with more limited currency in Onslow County's other principal towns, Jacksonville and Richlands.

The town's late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial architecture shares similarities of scale and form with commercial buildings built elsewhere in the county, but differs from these buildings in one important respect. The store buildings lining Swansboro's Front Street are almost exclusively of frame construction, whereas the early twentieth century commercial architecture of downtown Jacksonville and Richlands is built almost entirely of brick. Geography may lie behind this difference.

See continuation sheet

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The dominant house form of Swansboro's lumber years was the I House, incorporating either two-room or center-hall plans. Many of Swansboro's houses built during this period have the symmetrical two-story three-bay facades characteristic of the I house. Many one-story houses also have symmetrical three-bay facades reflecting two-room and center-hall plans within. In addition to these types, a number of two-story houses were built with side-hall plans.

Secondary characteristics which distinguish these turn-of-the-century houses include turned and sawn porch ornament, cornice and frieze board returns, decorative wood-shingling and louvered vents in gables, and entries flanked by sidelights with elaborate raised wooden panels under the lights. Several houses have chamfered porch posts with pronounced molded neckings and caps. Interiors are generally sheathed in beaded tongue-and-groove boards and mantels and stairs are embellished with sawn and turned ornament. In both the inside and outside of Swansboro's lumber boom houses can be found the delicate multiple moldings that superficially resemble Federal styling.

The Swansboro Land and Lumber Company was the only mill in Onslow County to have a band saw, and subsequently Swansboro houses and other buildings built during the years of the mill's operation have framing members bearing vertical saw marks. The latest houses to be associated with Swansboro's lumbering activities were more typical of the mainstream of American domestic architecture: four-squares, such as the second Pete Smith House (No. 31), and bungalows.

COMMERCIAL ARCHITECTURE:

Two antebellum commercial buildings survive in Swansboro:—the William Pugh Ferrand Store (No. 16) and the Robert Spence McLean Store (No. 19), both dating to the period immediately following an 1838 fire that ravaged Front Street. The two-story Ferrand Store is the only nineteenth century brick structure to survive in Onslow County (and also, apparently, one of the few to be built in the area). The frame McLean Store may originally have been only one story in height with a storage garrett; during the late nineteenth century it was given a full second story. Both of these structures retain many original interior and exterior features. Both were associated with the turpentine trade in late antebellum Swansboro (see Onslow County Multiple Property Documentation Form: Naval Stores and Lumber Production, 1734-1938: Naval Stores Production: Early Commercial Activity). The gable-front form of these two buildings relates them architecturally to commercial buildings built throughout the United States during the antebellum period.

Commercial architecture built during Swansboro's lumber boom years also adopted the gable-front form. Some of these buildings were quite small, such as the Richard Riggs Store (No. 30) on Front Street. Others were large such as the two-story Watson and Parkin "double store" on Front Street (No. 8) built as a speculative venture by coastal North Carolina hosteler William J. Moore in 1910. Six of Swansboro's commercial buildings are contributing (See Onslow County Multiple Property Documentation Form: Commercial Buildings).

MISCELLANEOUS ARCHITECTURE:

The majority of Swansboro's surviving historic architecture is domestic or residential, although the town's building stock was formerly complemented

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Not buildings per se, but vital to the town's early economy, were shipyards. Shipyards were located at several points along the town waterfront, most notably at the ends of Main and Moore streets. Iron rails once used to launch ships extend underwater at the end of Moore Street. Wooden piers once thronged the waterfront; remains of one possibly dating to the colonial period survive at nearby Deer Island (Burwell Jackson, personal communication). One of the few classes of structures related to Swansboro's maritime economy to survive in the town are fish houses, small gable-fronted frame structures where seafood was processed and packed. The 1930s Jim Kennedy Fish House (No.11) is the best preserved of these traditional fish houses.

Of the succession of sawmills that operated in the town between the 1880s and the 1920s, nothing survives other than the domestic and commercial infrastructure created by them. The largest of these, the circa 1900 Swansboro Land and Lumber Company Mill, included at least three large two-story machinery sheds and a commissary and office building. Another industry that has vanished without leaving any above-ground trace is grist milling. According to Swansboro historian Tucker Littleton, the town featured at different times as many as five windmills for the grinding of corn meal (Littleton, Along the Path of History).

Until the 1890s the Methodists were the only sect to erect a church building in Swansboro. In 1897 the Baptists raised a large church building on Main Street which survives today (No. 26). The earliest school in the town may have been established as early as 1783. A one-story frame Methodist academy stood on Walnut Street during the second half of the nineteenth century. The only educational building to survive in the district is the 1920s Emmerton School (No.65).

Swansboro lacks appreciable numbers of outbuildings dating to the period of significance. Notable exceptions are a two-room frame smokehouse and storage building behind the Hawkins-Glover House (No.87) and the James Thomas Bartley House privy (No. 43), which shares architectural features with the main house and may date to the 1890s. Local tradition asserts that this privy was once removed to Front Street where it served briefly as the town's post office (Errington Littleton, personal communication).

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SWANSBORO HISTORIC DISTRICT INVENTORY LIST

KEY:

The buildings in this inventory are usually named for their original owner or occupant, generally an individual, family, business, or institution (eg. Robert Lee Smith House). Occasionally, when a building has been substantially remodelled during the period of significance, the name of the later owner or occupant is added to that of the original owner or occupant (eg. Moore-Pritchard House). For the lesser contributing buildings and modern noncontributing buildings a generic title is used (eg. gable-fronted bungalow) or the present name of the occupant (usually a business) is used (eg. Ye Olde Drugstore Restaurant). Many of the names and construction dates listed in the inventory were provided by Swansboro historian Tucker Littleton's historical guidebook, Along the Path of History (1983). Littleton based his history on archival and deed research and local tradition. Other site histories were generated by the 1987-88 Onslow County Architectural Survey. The site files for this survey contain more complete architectural and historical discussions of the buildings in the district. These files are kept at the Survey and Planning Branch of the Department of Archives and History in Raleigh, with a second less-complete set at the Onslow County Museum (presently located in Richlands, NC).

Note: Numbers 57, 81, 82, 83, 112 and 113 are unassigned in the inventory list.

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National Register Status: C = contributing
N = noncontributing

All buildings are of weatherboarded frame construction unless otherwise noted.

List #	Street#	Date	Hgt.	Comment/original owner - occupant (if known)
Front Street (south side)				
C 1.	#107	ca.1931	1½	<u>Dorothy Sanders Cafe</u> ; board-and-batten shop/residence with rear shed room, gabled dormers; built by Sanders as coffeehouse in likeness of her father W.E. Mattocks' house. (NR, with entry 2)
C 2.	#109	1901-1910s	1½	<u>William Edward Mattocks House</u> ; board-and-batten three-bay double pile center-hall plan on full basement, decorative two-tier back porch, gabled dormers; built by marine engineer Mattocks in likeness of a traditional coastal plain cottage. (NR)
N 3.	#109a	ca.1950	1	Shed.
N 4.	#113	ca.1945	1	<u>Millsted Ice Plant</u> ; concrete block structure with block and frame additions, including apartments, waterfront restaurant, and pier.
N 5.	#115	ca.1950	1	<u>Snap Dragon Restaurant</u> ; false-fronted commercial building with deck over water.
N 6.	#117	ca.1950	2	<u>Ye Old Drugstore Building</u> ; concrete block commercial building with brick veneer, one-story side wing.
N 7.	#119	ca.1950	1	Brick commercial building, vacant.
C 8.	#201	1910	2	<u>Watson-Parkin Store</u> ; double-store building with novelty, board-and-batten, and aluminum siding, original decorative shelving, one-story side wing; built as a William J. Moore (Tarrymore Hotel) speculation, the building was first occupied by merchants Jeremiah Watson and James Elijah Parkin.

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|--|------|---------|----|--|
| C 9. | #131 | 1913 | 2 | <u>James Thomas Bartley Store</u> ; gable-fronted, commercial structure with modern shop front, vinyl siding, original decorative shelving, slightly later one-story side addition. This is the second store in Swansboro associated with Bartley, who sold hardware and general merchandise. |
| C 10. | #113 | 1913 | 2 | <u>George Littleton House</u> ; gable-fronted house with millwork in gables, one-story front-porch, aluminum siding; Littleton worked at the Cedar Point Fishery. |
| C 11. | #135 | ca.1930 | 1 | <u>Jim Kennedy Fishhouse</u> ; asphalt-sided utilitarian gable-fronted structure with modern porch and wood shingle siding, moved once within district. Kennedy was a fisherman who used this structure to process his catch. |
| (N) 12. | #137 | 1940s | 1 | Asphalt-sided fishhouse with traditional gable-fronted form. |
| <u>Front Street</u>
<u>(north side)</u> | | | | |
| C 13. | #140 | 1915 | 2 | <u>James Smith House</u> ; hip-roofed side-hall-plan house with hip-roofed dormer, one-story front porch. Smith was a captain who built this house on the site of his ca.1880 family home. |
| N 14. | #136 | ca.1950 | 1½ | House with dormers. |
| N 15. | #134 | ca.1960 | 1 | House with aluminum and brick siding. |
| C 16. | #122 | ca.1839 | 2½ | <u>William Pugh Ferrand Store</u> ; gable-fronted brick commercial building retaining much original architectural fabric, modern side and back porches, attic apartment. Ferrand built this store after his first structure burned, and used it as the headquarters of his extensive turpentine/retail business. |
| C 17. | #120 | ca.1890 | 1 | <u>Bartley-Pittman Store</u> ; false-fronted commercial structure with original display windows, second story removed in 1918. Merchants James Thomas Bartley and John A. Pittman were early occupant of the building. |

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- N 18. #118 1988 2 Commercial structure with false front and wooden display windows.
- C 19. #116 ca.1839 2 Robert Spence McLean Store; probably originally one-and-a-half-story gable fronted commercial building with mid-nineteenth century rear addition, ca. 1900 second story, much original interior architectural fabric survives including beaded ceiling joists and mid-nineteenth century wall-paper, half of a one-story twentieth century shop added to east side. McLean was a Scotsman involved in the turpentine trade. He occupied the building when it was partially burned by Union forces in 1864.
- C 20. #110 1934 1 Harry Moore Store; brick commercial building with stepped front and side parapets, tin ceiling; Moore had a general store here in the 1930s.
- N 21. #102 1925 2 Buckmaster Store-Capt Charlies Restaurant; false fronted commercial structure with corner entry, greatly modified and expanded with large, modern one-story block building as restaurant. The building was occupied by various groceries, a restaurant and a brothel between 1925 and 1945.

Moore Street
(east side)

- N 22. #204 ca.1950 1 Asbestos-sided house on concrete-block basement incorporating lumber from early twentieth century house on same site.
- C 23. #206 1904 2 Leon Andrew Sewell House; three-bay presumably originally two-room plan house with two-story rear wing, front gable, modern front porch and alterations.

Main Street
(east side)

- N (24.) #102 ca.1950 1 Much-altered restaurant with pier.
- C 25. #114 1902 2 David G. Ward House; three-bay center-hall plan house with decorative front porch, triple-A roof with wood-shingling and millwork in front gable, one-story ell; Ward was a sailor.

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- C 26. #116 1897 2 (Former) Swansboro Baptist Church; gable-fronted building with first floor worship space and second floor Masonic meeting space above (originally), decorative interior posts and sheathing, former belfry, aluminum siding. This building was the first Baptist church built in Swansboro.
- C 27. #202 1893 1 James Thomas Bartley House; three-bay center-hall plan (originally) house with triple-A roof, highly decorative front and ell porches and gable vents. Bartley was a merchant.
- C 28. #202a ca.1893 1 Semi-detached kitchen and dining room of the Bartley House, same detailing.
- N 29. #202b ca.1950 1 Rustic well structure on site of earlier well structure.
- Main Street
(west side)
- C 30. #103 ca.1920 1 Richard Riggs Store; false-fronted board-and-batten commercial structure with front pent roof. Riggs operated a grocery store in this building in the 1930s.
- C 31. #115 ca.1916 2 Pete Smith House 2; hip-roofed four-square plan house with one-story front porch, aluminum siding. This was the second Onslow County house of Smith, who was associated with sawmills at Swansboro and Silverdale.
- C 32. #115a ca.1930 1 Hip-roofed board-and-batten sided two-car garage.
- N 33. #115b ca.1970 1 Gable-fronted garage.
- N 34. #203 ca.1960 1 Carolina Telephone Building; windowless utilitarian brick structure with side parking lot.
- N 35. #205 ca.1950 1 Swansboro Barbershop Building; concrete-block commercial building with brick veneer, aluminum fronts for two shops.

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- C 36. #209 ca.1778 2 Peter Ringware House; possibly the oldest house in Onslow County, the Ringware House is a Georgian/Federal style five-bay house with engaged two-tier front and back porches, a large first floor room on one side of a center hall and a pair of rooms sharing a chimney on the other side. Most original interior and exterior hardware and woodwork survive. Early nineteenth century one-story rear kitchen and dining room, formerly semi-detached. Ringware was a captain. His house was owned by many prominent Swansboro citizens throughout the nineteenth century. Archaeological explorations undertaken in the 1960s suggested a late eighteenth century date of construction for the
- &
C 36a. (kitchen/dining room)

Water Street
(south side)

- C 37. #105 1st 1/2 1 1/2 19th c. Beaufort House; hall-parlor plan coastal plain cottage with later one-story side kitchen and dining room, porch ventilation chutes in main house porch ceiling, stair rising in rear shed room, some original interior fabric but mostly from late nineteenth century. Beaufort captain Thomas Thomas bought the lot in 1851 and sold it a year later with a house on it. Local tradition asserts that the house was moved from Beaufort, NC.
- C 38. #103 1910 2 Charles Russell House 2; wood-shingle sided gable-fronted side-plan house with one-story front porch, bracketed eaves. Built by carpenter Charles Russell for himself. Russell's first house stands on Swansboro Main Street extension, outside the district.
- C 39. #119 1912 2 Dan Ward House; gable-fronted side-hall plan house with decorative one-story front porch. Ward operated a steamship line between Swansboro and Morehead City.
- N 40. #119 ca.1950 1 Shed.

Water Street
(north side)

- N 41. #102 ca.1900 1 1/2 John Edward Kirkman House; much-altered three-bay house with ell, modern front porch.

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|-------|-------|---------|---|---|
| N 42. | #106 | 1946 | 1 | Aluminum-sided house. |
| C 43. | #106a | 1890s | 1 | <u>James Thomas Bartley House Privy</u> ; features decorative vents like those on main house, stands in what was originally the Bartley garden. (see entry 27). Local tradition asserts that this privy served temporarily as Swansboro's post office in the early twentieth century. |
| C 44. | #114 | ca.1935 | 1 | <u>Amelia Kennedy House</u> ; aluminum-sided cottage with front porch. This is one of the last Swansboro houses built by local carpenter Robert Lee Smith. |
| C 45. | #116 | 1916 | 1 | <u>Mark Bloodgood House</u> ; early bungalow with front porch engaged under hipped roof, novelty siding. Dan Russell owned the house soon after Bloodgood. |
| C 46. | #204 | ca.1900 | 2 | <u>Bloodgood House</u> ; aluminum-sided house with one-story side kitchen and front porch. |
| N 47. | #204a | ca.1950 | 1 | Concrete-block garage. |
| N 48. | #204b | ca.1950 | 1 | Shed. |
| N 49. | #206 | 1940s | 1 | Gable-fronted bungalow with hip-roofed front porch. |
| C 50. | #212 | ca.1920 | 1 | Gable-fronted bungalow with novelty siding, gabled front porch. |
| C 51. | #214 | ca.1900 | 1 | <u>Edward N. Hill House</u> ; three-bay double-pile two-room plan house with triple-A roof, ell, re-worked front porch, aluminum siding. Hill was a carpenter, boatbuilder, pilot, and fisherman. |
| N 52. | #216 | ca.1970 | 1 | Aluminum-sided duplex with front deck. |
| C 53. | #218 | ca.1893 | 2 | <u>James Elijah Parkin House</u> ; three-bay center-hall plan I-house, with decorative one-story front porch; two-story ell, front gable, elaborate interior tongue-and-groove sheathing, mantel, and stair details. Parkin was a steamship pilot, and, after 1900, a Swansboro merchant. |
| C 54. | #220 | ca.1915 | 2 | <u>Isaiah Willis House</u> ; gable-fronted side-hall plan house with millwork in gable, one-story front porch, aluminum siding. |