

Harrison, Richard ^[1]

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by Claiborne T. Smith, Jr., 1988

30 Jan. 1768–19 May 1856

Richard Harrison, planter and legislator, was born at Leonardstown, St. Mary's County, Md., the son of Kenelm and Mary Harrison. Having inherited a plantation in Edgecombe County ^[2], N.C., as provided in the will of his father in 1777, Richard Harrison moved there in 1789. He became a member of the Royal White Hart Lodge ^[3] in Halifax ^[4] in 1791 and represented Edgecombe County in the state senate from 1801 to 1807. As a planter he was unusually successful, and in his lifetime he amassed a large landed estate.

Harrison married Martha Smith, the daughter of Arthur and Anne Ruffin Smith of Halifax County ^[5] and the widow of Marmaduke Bell. They had three children, whom Harrison survived. He and his family were first buried on the plantation; their graves were later moved to Greenwood Cemetery, Tarboro.

In his long and involved will of twenty-four pages, Harrison left his estate to the children of his sisters Mary Dicken Powell and Ann Lewis. His home plantation a few miles west of Tarboro went to his nephew, Dr. Joseph John Willis Powell. In 1857 Dr. Powell began building Coolmore ^[6] on the Harrison homestead. Considered a fine example of Victorian architecture, Coolmore took three years to complete. Powell lived in his new home for only a few weeks before he died. At the sale of Bennett Bunn, Richard Harrison had bought the fine house Bunn had erected near the falls of the Tar River at Rocky Mount. Referred to in Harrison's will as "The Brick House," it was left to "nephew Kenelm N. Lewis." Presently known as "The Lewis Place" or "Stonewall," the house has been restored and is maintained by the Nash County Historical Society.

References:

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Records of the Powell family at Coolmore.

Thomas T. Waterman, *The Early Architecture of North Carolina* (1941).

John H. Wheeler, *Historical Sketches of North Carolina* (1851).

Wills and deeds of Halifax and Edgecombe counties (North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh).

Wills of St. Mary's County (Maryland State Archives, Annapolis).

Additional Resources:

United States Department of the Interior. National Park Service. National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form: Coolmore Plantation. By J. G. Zehmer and John B. Wells. October 5, 1970. <http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/nr/ED0006.pdf> ^[7] (accessed April 15, 2014).

Smith, Claiborne T. *Smith of Scotland Neck: planters on the Roanoke*. Gateway Press, 1976. 73.

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