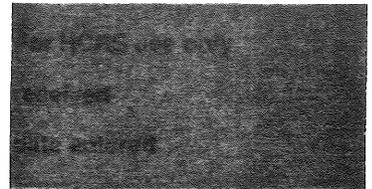


**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 Demens-Rumbough-Crawley House

and/or common Hanger Hall

**2. Location**

street & number 31 Park Avenue \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Asheville \_\_\_ vicinity of congressional district Eleventh

state North Carolina code 37 county Buncombe code 021

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
___ district	___ public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	___ agriculture <span style="margin-left: 100px;">___ museum</span>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial <span style="margin-left: 100px;">___ park</span>
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence</span>
___ site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	___ entertainment <span style="margin-left: 100px;">___ religious</span>
___ object	___ in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	___ government <span style="margin-left: 100px;">___ scientific</span>
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial <span style="margin-left: 100px;">___ transportation</span>
		___ no	___ military <span style="margin-left: 100px;">___ other:</span>

**4. Owner of Property**

name Howard Hanger

street & number 31 Park Avenue

city, town Asheville \_\_\_ vicinity of state North Carolina 28801

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Buncombe County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Asheville \_\_\_ vicinity of state North Carolina

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no

date \_\_\_ federal \_\_\_ state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

---

## 7. Description

---

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> slightly moved
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

---

### **Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Demens-Rumbough-Crawley house is one of the largest and most unusual late nineteenth century houses in Asheville. Sited on a bluff above the French Broad River, the house was once part of an ambitious neighborhood development called Prospect Park, and if the 1981 Birds-Eye View of the city can be believed, at one time a number of architecturally related residences occupied neighboring lots. Today this house is the sole survivor of the development, an isolated mansion adjoined by light industrial properties such as a bus maintenance shed and a welding supply dealership. A few modest twentieth century dwellings line the side streets off Park Avenue. Though fairly near the old center of town, Park Avenue is off the main arteries of travel, and the house is known to relatively few Asheville residents.

The house is notable chiefly for the exuberant exterior and interior ornament of a character unequalled elsewhere in the city, combining Queen Anne, Eastlake, and Italianate decorative motifs. The two-story residence is constructed of brick laid in six course American bond, and rests on a stone foundation. A low-pitched hip roof shelters the structure. It is basically square in plan, with a two-story projection, surmounted by an unusual tower, on the right side of the front (north) elevation, which is in turn fronted by a two-story polygonal bay.

The rather rigid and geometrical exterior ornamentation is remarkable, and some observers have attributed its character to the Russian sensibility of the man who is believed to have built the house. Most striking is the deep, four-stage layered cornice that carries around the entire exterior, the various stages enriched with closely spaced brackets, panels, pendants, and rondels. The cornice of the one-story front porch, which shelters the four bays of the facade to the left of the projecting bay, features a spindle frieze, pendants, and other sawn and turned ornament. The porch posts, perhaps not original, are simple square-in-section ones without a connecting balustrade. A second floor entrance to the porch roof indicates that there may have been a balcony or balustrade on the second level, now lost.

The two-over-two sash windows throughout the building have pedimented hoods with triangular panels. The identical first and second story central entrances are glazed double-leaf doors flanked by multi-pane sidelights and transom.

The square-in-plan, three-stage tower rests on a base (perhaps altered from the original) pierced with pairs of porthole windows on each elevation. The taller but narrower second stage has a narrow casement window centered on each face. This is in turn covered by a clipped cross-gable roof with deeply overhanging eaves, supported by curvilinear sawn brackets. Shingles and sawn bargeboard decorate the gables of the tower roof.

The interior follows a center hall plan, two rooms deep with additional service rooms to the rear. The lavish interiors are completely intact, and represent one of the highest expressions of the late nineteenth century woodworker's art in Asheville. The impressive center hall is finished with parquet floors in a rich interlocking geometric pattern, and has stained tongue-and-groove walls over a high paneled wainscot. The ceiling, also tongue-and-groove, is embellished with a geometric overlay of molded boards. The closed-string stair features elaborately molded and paneled newels, a

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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received  
date entered

Continuation sheet

DESCRIPTION

Item number 7

Page one

paneled spandrel, and heavy turned balusters supporting a ramped and molded handrail. An unusual feature of the stair is the spindle-work "canopy" over the landing, supported by turned posts rising from the newels. The hall mantel is a bold composition of free-standing turned posts and spindles, with various paneled and shaped ornamental devices, including sunburst motifs, fashioned around the tiled fire opening and mirrored overmantel.

Other rooms of the house, both upstairs and down, are only slightly less impressive. Walls are plastered, usually over a paneled or vertical tongue-and-groove wainscot. Mantels are variations of the same theme, with spindle work and a variety of ornamental plates and other decorative embellishments, most with mirrored overmantels. Door and window surrounds are everywhere molded with rondels, pendants, and other devices.

The full basement is partitioned off into several simply finished, functional spaces.

The only outbuilding is a small frame garage with bracketed eaves, shingled gable ends, and ornamental bargeboard in the gables, probably contemporary or near-contemporary with the house.

## 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 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 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 checked="" 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** ca. 1890      **Builder/Architect** Attributed to Peter A. Demens

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Demens-Rumbough-Crawley House, now known locally as "Hanger Hall," is one of Asheville's most imposing and unusual late nineteenth century residences. The large brick structure combines a variety of stylistic influences of the period, including Queen Anne, Italianate, and Eastlake motifs; especially notable are the elaborate porch and cornice detail, the unusual tower, and rich interiors featuring extensive parquet flooring. Though the exact date of construction and the original owner remain something of a mystery, the house was probably built in 1890 for Peter A. Demens (1850-1919), a Russian-born entrepreneur who was instrumental in the founding of St. Petersburg, Florida, and who is credited with naming that resort city after his Russian birthplace. Demens remained in Asheville only two years before moving on to Los Angeles, selling the property to Colonel and Mrs. James H. Rumbough, owners of the famous Mountain Park Hotel of Hot Springs in neighboring Madison County. The Rumbough family kept the property as an Asheville residence until 1913. In 1919 it became the home of Miss Ida Jolly Crawley (1867-1946), a Tennessee-born artist and world traveler who opened the house to the public as the "Ida Jolly Crawley Museum of Art and Archaeology," or "The House of Pan." Miss Crawley displayed her own artworks and assorted artifacts collected during her travels, and her house was the city's first public art museum. Miss Crawley remained in the house until her death in 1946. Since 1973 the property has been owned by jazz musician Howard Hanger, who is steadily rehabilitating the structure.

### Criteria Assesment:

- A. Associated with Asheville's important late nineteenth century boom.
- B. Associated with the lives of three unique personalities: Peter A. Demens, Russian entrepreneur and founder of St. Petersburg, Florida; Colonel James H. Rumbough, owner of one of the most famous resort hotels in the eastern United States; and Ida Jolly Crawley, an independent and dynamic woman who opened Asheville's first art museum in the house.
- C. Embodies characteristics of a variety of late-nineteenth century architectural influences in one of Asheville's largest and most elaborately finished residences.

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

SIGNIFICANCE

Item number 8

Page one

Peter A. Demens, the anglicized name of the probable builder of the unusual house in Asheville's Prospect Park Section, was born Pieter Alexevitch Dementief in St. Petersburg, Russia, on May 1, 1850, to a family of Russian nobility.<sup>1</sup> After receiving a polished education--he was fluent in several languages--at the age of 30 he left his family estates in the Tver provinces to immigrate to America, first settling at Sanford, Florida.<sup>2</sup> His motives for leaving his homeland are not altogether clear; some sources claim that he was expelled for political reasons,<sup>3</sup> and others cite his great enthusiasm for the promises of unbridled capitalism in America.<sup>4</sup> Considering his ambition and force of personality he exhibited in this country--and his penchant for the heady atmosphere of American boom towns--his motives may have contained elements of both explanations.

In Florida, Demens first established himself in the lumber business, but he soon became involved with the difficult and financially risky construction of the Orange Belt Railway from Sanford, Florida, to the Pinellas Peninsula on the Gulf coast, the site of present-day St. Petersburg.<sup>5</sup> The completion of the railroad in 1888 provided the catalyst for the initial development of the resort city, but Demens was not to prosper from this success. His overextended financial position forced him to sell out his interests, and he left Florida for good in 1890.<sup>6</sup> But his contribution to the development of the area have since earned him the title "father of St. Petersburg," and Florida tradition credits him for providing the name for the city after his Russian birthplace.<sup>7</sup>

In 1890 Demens brought his family to Asheville, N. C., at that time itself a booming resort town that was attracting investors from all over the country. He was to remain in Asheville only two years, though judging from his ambitious new dwelling, his original intentions may have been for a longer stay.

Whether Demens was actually the first occupant of the house attributed to him remains open to some question. At 1890 conveyance of the property in the Prospect Park Development to Raisse Demens, Peter's Russian wife, from C. E. Graham, a developer who owned much property in the section, was made in consideration of \$3,750 and included "land with premises and appurtenances,"<sup>8</sup> indicating the presence of a house on the land. Though a local news item of 1922 reported that the house was built by Demens at the remarkable cost, for that time, of \$35,000,<sup>9</sup> this seems unlikely considering that Demens sold the house after a two year occupancy for only \$5,000.<sup>10</sup> It is thus possible that the developer Graham was the builder and first occupant, though it may be more likely that the two men worked out a private financial arrangement allowing Demens to build a house on Graham property, perhaps with Graham's financial backing. An undated plat of the Prospect Park development shows the names Demens and Graham on an undivided tract which includes the present six acre tract.<sup>11</sup> The 1890 City Directory shows both men as residents of Park Avenue, with no residence numbers indicated.<sup>12</sup> Whatever, it seems certain that the house was in existence in its present form during Demens' occupancy. The 1891 Birds-Eye View of Asheville shows what appears to be a fairly clear image of the house, complete with cupola.<sup>13</sup>

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet      SIGNIFICANCE      Item number      8      Page      two

According to local tradition, Demens was his own architect and directed the construction of the house himself.<sup>14</sup> In Asheville he owned and operated the P. A. Demens Woodworking Company,<sup>15</sup> and he is reputed to have been the builder of the old Asheville Post Office, which stood on the site of present-day Pritchard Park in downtown Asheville.<sup>16</sup>

Peter and Raisse Demens raised seven children; four were born in Russia, two in Florida, and the last, Vera, was born during the family's brief sojourn in Asheville. Vera is reported to have later married the Russian Count Andrey Tolstoy.<sup>17</sup>

In 1892 Demens sold his Asheville property and moved to a third second greater boom town, Los Angeles. There he successfully entered several lines of business, but eventually became best known as a newspaper commentator for the Los Angeles Times and a correspondent for the Associated Press. He made return trips to Europe and Russia in this capacity. He died in Los Angeles in 1919.<sup>18</sup>

The Demens property in Asheville was purchased in 1892 by Colonel James H. and Carrie T. Rumbough, in Mrs. Rumbough's name.<sup>19</sup> Colonel Rumbough was owner and operator of the famous Mountain Park Hotel in Hot Springs in neighboring Madison County, and the family apparently used the Asheville house as a part-time residence.<sup>20</sup> The house was later remembered by locals as a place of high living and social importance during the Rumbough occupancy.<sup>21</sup>

Carrie Rumbough conveyed the property to her son, John C. Rumbough in 1914.<sup>22</sup> The younger Rumbough held the property only one year, and between 1915 and 1919 there were two other short-term owners,<sup>23</sup> both of whom appear to have used the house for rental purposes.<sup>24</sup>

In 1919 the house was purchased by Ida Jolly Crawley,<sup>25</sup> a dynamic and unusual woman who established a museum in the house called The Ida Jolly Crawley Museum of Art and Archaeology, or "The House of Pan." Miss Crawley was born in Pond Creek, Tennessee in 1867, the daughter of Major J. Fred and Martha Phillips Crawley. She studied five years at the Corcoran School of Art in Washington, D. C., and pursued her interests in art and archaeology in several parts of the world. By 1939 her reputation as an artist, world traveler, and adventuress earned her a place in Durwood Howe's American Woman: A Standard Biographical Dictionary of Notable Women.<sup>26</sup> Over the years Miss Crawley collected a wide range of artifacts and artworks, and she displayed these in 16 of the 25 rooms in the house. The rather peculiar collection included such items as antique furniture, Pompeian pottery and lava, Dead Sea water, botanical and geological specimens, and many of her own artworks.<sup>27</sup> A sign over the mantel read:

Welcome to the House of Pan.  
 Muse O'er its Trophies,  
 Its Owner  
 Its Art.  
 From Dove-Tower to Crypt  
 A Spirit You'll Find,  
 A Personality of Heart,  
 Has Each Life a Purpose,

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

SIGNIFICANCE

Item number 8

Page three

A Bit of Earth to Design?  
Mold it Nobly,  
Infinite,  
Sublime.

August 17, 1919

Ida Jolly Crawley<sup>28</sup>

Some Ashevilleians recall the collection with reverence; others apparently were somewhat less impressed.<sup>29</sup> Miss Crawley was the sole supporter of the museum for 27 years, until her death in 1946.

At Miss Crawley's death the house was willed to her sister, Mrs. Olga Williams,<sup>30</sup> who occupied the house as her residence until her death in 1964. Though the Crawley will stipulated that the museum was to remain open,<sup>31</sup> The House of Pan disappeared from the city directories after 1946.<sup>32</sup> In 1964 the property was conveyed to the daughters of Mrs. Williams,<sup>33</sup> who immediately auctioned the contents and sold the house to retired Vice Admiral and Mrs. Robert P. McConnell.<sup>34</sup> The McConnells did not live in the house but made initial efforts at restoration until the admiral's death in 1973. His widow sold the property in that year to Howard Hanger,<sup>35</sup> an ordained Methodist minister and jazz musician who is now attempting to maintain and restore the mansion. Hanger and several of his friends and music associates now occupy the house, and it is locally called "Hanger Hall."

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet      SIGNIFICANCE      Item number      8      Page      four

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Karl H. Grismer, The Story of St. Petersburg (St. Petersburg: P. K. Smith Company, 1948), 270. Hereinafter cited as Grismer, The Story of St. Petersburg.

<sup>2</sup>Walter P. Fuller, St. Petersburg and Its People (St. Petersburg: Great Outdoors Press, 1972), 93. Hereinafter cited as Fuller, St. Petersburg and Its People.

<sup>3</sup>Hampton Dunn, Yesterday's St. Petersburg (Miami: E. A. Seeman Publishing, Inc., 1973), p. 18.

<sup>4</sup>Fuller, St. Petersburg and Its People, 93.

<sup>5</sup>Grismer, The Story of St. Petersburg, 270.

<sup>6</sup>Grismer, The Story of St. Petersburg, 270.

<sup>7</sup>Del Marth, St. Petersburg: Once Upon a Time (City of St. Petersburg, 1976), 9. Also Grismer, The Story of St. Petersburg, 270.

<sup>8</sup>Buncombe County Deed Book 71, page 326.

<sup>9</sup>"Trip Through Private Museum in Asheville One of Interest" Asheville Citizen, January 26, 1922. Hereinafter cited as Asheville Citizen, January 26, 1922.

<sup>10</sup>Buncombe County Deed Book 81, page 96.

<sup>11</sup>Plat of Prospect Park Development (undated), Demens-Crawley-Rumbough House file, Survey and Planning Branch, N. C. Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, N. C.

<sup>12</sup>City Directory, Asheville, N. C., 1890.

<sup>13</sup>1891 Birds-Eye View of the City of Asheville, Demens-Crawley-Rumbough House file, Survey and Planning Branch, N. C. Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, N. C.

<sup>14</sup>Asheville Citizen, January 26, 1922.

<sup>15</sup>City Directory, Asheville, N. C., 1890.

<sup>16</sup>Asheville Citizen, January 26, 1922.

<sup>17</sup>Grismer, The Story of St. Petersburg, 271.

<sup>18</sup>Grismer, The Story of St. Petersburg, 271.

<sup>19</sup>Buncombe County Deed Book 81, page 96.

<sup>20</sup>Asheville City Directories, 1896-1914.

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only  
received  
date entered

Continuation sheet SIGNIFICANCE

Item number 8

Page five

- <sup>21</sup> Asheville Citizen, January 26, 1922.
- <sup>22</sup> Buncombe County Deed Book 178, page 243.
- <sup>23</sup> Buncombe County Deed Book 190, page 312, and Deed Book 230, page 343.
- <sup>24</sup> Asheville City Directories, 1915-1919.
- <sup>25</sup> Buncombe County Deed Book 230, page 368.
- <sup>26</sup> Durward Howes, ed., American Women: The Standard Biographical Dictionary of Notable Women, (Los Angeles: American Publications, Inc., 1939), p. 200.
- <sup>27</sup> Asheville Citizen, January 26, 1922.
- <sup>28</sup> Asheville Citizen, January 25, 1922.
- <sup>29</sup> Patricia Bland, Interview with Mrs. Wallace Wright, February 10, 1980.
- <sup>30</sup> Buncombe County Will Book Y, p. 555.
- <sup>31</sup> Buncombe County Will Book Y, p. 555.
- <sup>32</sup> Asheville City Directories, 1946-1965.
- <sup>33</sup> Buncombe County Deed Book 905, page 178.
- <sup>34</sup> Buncombe County Deed Book 805, page 184.
- <sup>35</sup> Buncombe County Deed Book 1089, page 255.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property 6

Quadrangle name Asheville, N. C.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A 

1	7	3	5	8	0	9	0	3	9	3	9	3	1	9
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property is a 6 acre tract of land identified in the Buncombe County Tax Office as Lot 115 of Sheet 4, Ward 4, including the residence, the outbuilding, and all land in continuous historical association with the house.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county N/A code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Description by Michael Southern, Survey Specialist, Significance by Patricia Bland, consultant. Western Office, Archives and History, 704-298-5024

organization Archaeology and Historic Preservation N. C. Division of Archives and History date July 10, 1980

street & number 109 E. Jones Street telephone 919-733-6545

city or town Raleigh state North Carolina 27611

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

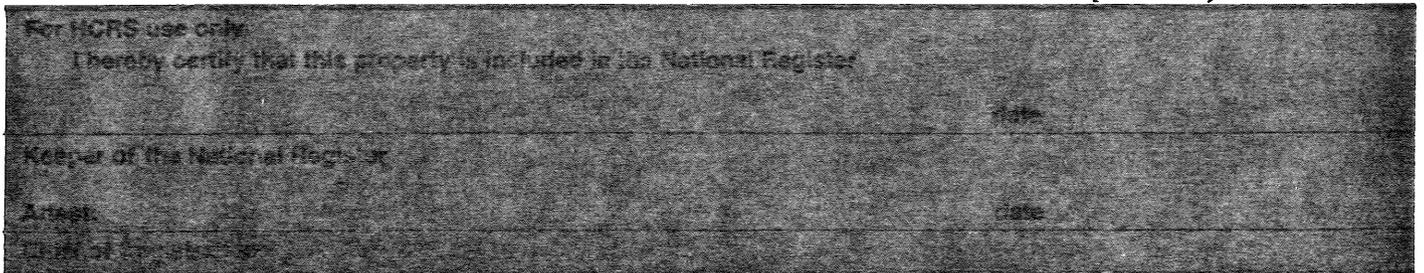
The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

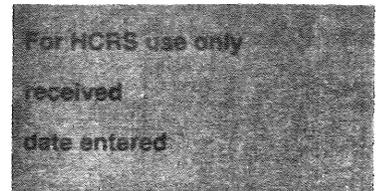
State Historic Preservation Officer signature *William S. King*

title State Historic Preservation Officer date April 14, 1982



**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet BIBLIOGRAPHY

Item number 9

Page one

BIBLIOGRAPHYAsheville City Directories. 1890-1973.

Buncombe County Records

Deeds

Wills

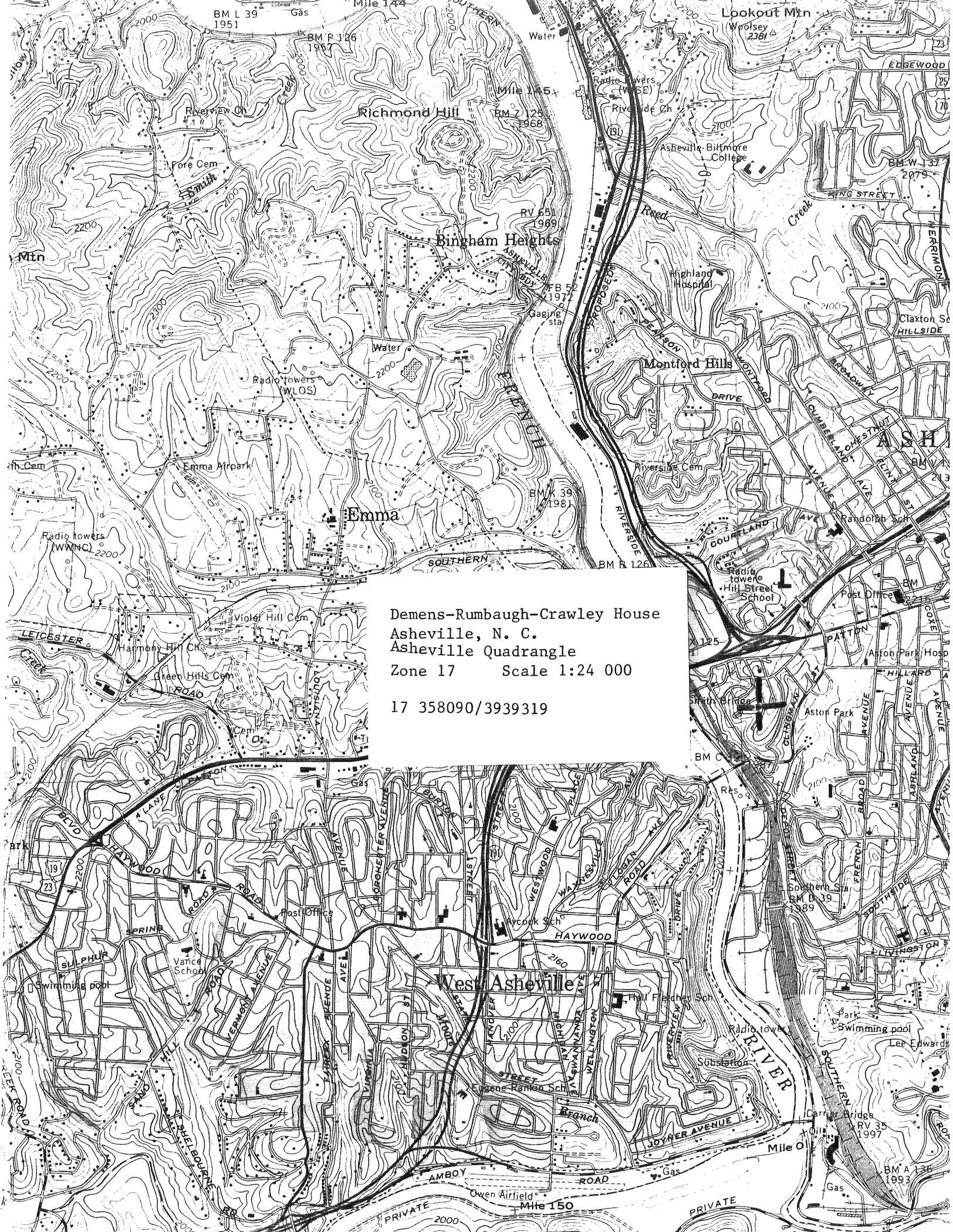
Dunn, Hampton. Yesterday's St. Petersburg. Miami: E. A. Seeman Publishing, Inc., 1973.Fuller, Walter P. St. Petersburg and Its People. St. Petersburg: Great Outdoors Press, 1972.Grismer, Karl H. The Story of St. Petersburg. St. Petersburg: P. K. Smith Company, 1948.Howes, Durward, ed. American Women: The Standard Biographical Dictionary of Notable Women. Los Angeles: American Publications.

Interviews

Howard Hanger

Mrs. Wallace Wright

Marth, Del. St. Petersburg: Once Upon a Time. (St. Petersburg: City of St. Petersburg, 1976.)"Trip Through Private Museum in Asheville One of Interest." Asheville Citizen, January 26, 1922.



Demens-Rumbaugh-Crawley House  
Asheville, N. C.  
Asheville Quadrangle  
Zone 17    Scale 1:24 000  
17 358090/3939319

