

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: North Carolina
COUNTY: Catawba
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Weidner Rock House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
S.R. 1142, 0.8 mi. southeast of junction with S.R. 1008

CITY OR TOWN:
Hickory township

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
Tenth

The Hon. James Broyhill

STATE: North Carolina CODE: 37 COUNTY: Catawba CODE: 035

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Mr. Alex A. Shuford IV

STREET AND NUMBER:
Route 1, Box 520

CITY OR TOWN:
Hickory

STATE:
North Carolina

CODE:
37

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Catawba County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Newton

STATE:
North Carolina

CODE:
37

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:
 Federal
 State
 County
 Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

CODE:

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Sitting on the lip of a hill which slopes to a stream in the bottom land below is a sturdy stone house of coursed rubble, reminiscent of the structures of the early German settlers in this area who came to North Carolina from Pennsylvania. The three-bay main facade of the Weidner Rock House has a central entrance protected by a hip roof porch that extends across the first level of the facade. The second floor lacks a central bay. The date "1844" is inscribed on one of the stones near the top of the east side of the main facade, just beneath the simple box cornice. The windows of the first story have nine-over-six sash and vertically sheathed shutters held in place by strap hinges. The windows at the second level have six-over-six sash. The end chimneys, which project only slightly from the walls, are flanked by windows at each level; the windows in the gables are small with six lights. An exception to the fenestration pattern occurs on the west end where a one-story frame wing joins the rear half of this facade. Here a door to the wing replaces the window space at the first level and the corresponding opening at the second level is omitted. The rear of the main block is covered by a two-story, box-like addition which replaced a large shed porch. The gable roof frame addition to the west has a stone end chimney, a shed porch across the front and a shed addition across the rear. This wing has undergone many changes. An old, six-over-six sash window with raised-paneled shutters is located on the front side of the wing.

The stone main block has two large rooms at each level. The interior combines some quite early fabric with mid-nineteenth century elements. The central entrance opens into the large east room which has wide, symmetrically molded architraves with all exterior openings set in deep reveals as they are throughout the house. Opposite the entrance bay is a similar door which leads onto a large porch, recently converted to a sun porch. A door in the center of the partition which separates the two first-floor rooms has been blocked by a stair on the west side of the partition. Entrance to the west room is now gained through a door near the rear of the house in this partition. The mantels in the east and west rooms are similar, each consisting of a very wide symmetrically molded band around the fire opening topped by a shallow molded shelf. Each of the doors in the east room has eight flat panels. The cases of the front and rear doors of the east room are symmetrically molded and have large, unadorned corner blocks. These doors, like many throughout the house, have box locks. The ceilings throughout the house are flush sheathed and the plastered walls carry a small molded wooden cornice. The west room has a door consisting of four equal sized panels below sixteen glazed lights which is centered to the rear of the room. Also in the same room, to the rear of the chimney, is a door with six raised panels, surmounted by a three-light transom, leading to the wing. The wing side of this door has vertical sheathing and is supported by strap hinges. In the southwest corner of the west room is a built-in corner cupboard with wide symmetrically molded strips (similar to the door cases) and flat-paneled doors. The stair that rises from the west room appears to be a twentieth century addition, with access to the second floor originally gained by exterior stairs housed under the rear two-story porch, now re-modeled.

The two rooms on the second floor, main block, now connect in the rear

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at the top of the steps; however, it appears that before the remodeling, access to the rooms was gained only by exterior doors near the center of the rear facade; the door frames still remain and lead into the remodeled rear of the house. The mantels on the second floor are nearly the same size but of different design. The one in the west room appears to be the earliest in the house; it follows a Georgian design, with a narrow molded architrave around the wide brick border of the fire opening and two horizontal, raised panels beneath a small molded shelf. The east room has a mantel of the typical mid-nineteenth century variety, with plain pilasters supporting a frieze whose lower edge follows a steep ogee-arched outline. It is surmounted by a small, molded shelf. The window frames on the second floor are simple with unadorned corner blocks. The architrave extends to the floor to frame a plastered panel beneath the heavy, plain window sill. The doors at the second level have six raised panels with the exception of the one leading to the enclosed stair located in the west room which gives access to the attic. It is made up of five horizontal panels which are flat on the front and raised on the rear.

A long, narrow hall leads from the first-floor west room of the main block to the main room of the wing. The wing rooms are quite plain with walls having both horizontal and vertical sheathing. A curious feature is a range of horizontal, flat panels which rises about twelve inches from the floor and extends along the north wall of the hall across the front of the wing. A door in the main room with six raised panels leads to the attic stair which rises on the south side of the fireplace which has been reworked. The stair consists of a series of winders which are visible from the main room. The remainder of the wing has been considerably altered.

3. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1799, 1804

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Reflecting the building traditions of the industrious German settlers who comprised a large portion of the early population of Catawba County, the Weidner Rock House is an interesting combination of several interior architectural styles. Although stone construction is commonly associated with German settlers from the Pennsylvania area, this is one of the few surviving examples in North Carolina. The house is preserved in its rural setting.

The land on which the Weidner Rock House is located was first settled by Henry Weidner (Johann Heinrich Weidner), a German immigrant from the region of Saxony. He had arrived on the ship Molly at Philadelphia in 1741 and received his first land grants in what was then Anson County in 1750. His holdings amounted to 1,240 acres on Henry's Fork of the south fork of the Catawba River. (This tributary is now known as Henry River.) According to the State Records of North Carolina, the area was "largely settled by Germans from Pennsylvania. The pioneer of these immigrants was Henry Weidner (Whitner), who, about 1745, came alone to this region to hunt and trap. He lived in peace with the Indians who still held the soil." Tradition relates, however, that about the time of the French and Indian War, some of Weidner's relatives living near him were murdered by Indians. After he abandoned his homestead for safer territory in South Carolina, several years passed before Weidner returned to his North Carolina home--the first Weidner house, built largely of stone, and located over a spring.

A road from the present site of Hickory led by the Weidner residence to Charleston, South Carolina. By 1779 it was known as the Ramsour Road. Its existence lends credibility to the tradition that troops mustered at Weidner's before marching to the Battle of King's Mountain in which one of Weidner's sons, Abram, was killed. Two years before his death in 1792 Henry Weidner, Sr., deeded some of his land to his son, Henry, and it is probably about this time that the present Weidner Rock House was begun. Henry Whitener (Weidner), Jr. lived there until 1804 when he sold the house with 392 acres to Jacob Summey, Jr., for \$4,000. George Summey inherited the house and sold it with 93 acres for \$1,000 to John Wilfong, Jr., in 1826. Wilfong was a successful farmer and businessman, and the son of Catawba County's only soldier of the Continental Line. According to a tax list of 1837, John Wilfong, Jr. owned the "Costner Tract" of 579 acres worth \$4,500, a 57-acre tract worth \$44, and a 93-acre tract "joining J. Whitener and others" worth \$350. The latter tract is no doubt the Weidner Rock House and its relatively low valuation at this time suggests that the

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house may have fallen into disrepair or, as current information suggests, it may have been made uninhabitable by flooding. Tradition says that in a single day's effort involving teams of mule-drawn wagons moving in a circle, the house was moved to its present location higher up on a hill side. The reconstruction of the house probably occurred in 1844, as attested by that date incised in a stone high up under the eaves.

Wilfong's holdings amounted to 2,207 acres worth \$24,750 according to the United States Agricultural Schedule of 1860. In addition to his success as a farmer he was instrumental in starting the Western North Carolina Railroad. Wilfong and his wife were the parents of six Confederate soldiers. General Robert E. Lee, writing to thank Mrs. Wilfong for a gift in 1865, said "I am more gratified at your devoting so many sons to the defense of the country. If they are all equal to the one I know, Captain Wilfong, 12 N.C. you should be truly grateful."

When he died in 1883, Wilfong devised "my Rock house plantation" to his wife for her life, and then to his son James E. Wilfong. The Weidner Rock House was owned by members of the Wilfong family until 1942; it is now owned by Alex A. Shuford, IV, of Hickory, who makes it his home.

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9.

Lincoln County Records, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).

Murphy, J. L., Rev. "Report of the Exercises Held at the Old Pioneer's Homestead in Catawba County, N.C. May 30, 1894." Hickory, North Carolina: Hickory Printing Company, 1895.

Preslar, Charles J., Jr., editor. A History of Catawba County. Salisbury, North Carolina: Rowan Printing Co., 1954.

Rowe, Mabel Miller. "Old Rock House," Hickory Record. Hickory, North Carolina: February 26, 1938.

Sherrill, William, L. Annals of Lincoln County. Baltimore: Regional Publishing Co., 1967.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Research by Charles Blume, Jr., survey specialist; architectural description by Charles Greer Suttlemyre, Jr., survey specialist.
 Catawba County Records, Catawba County Courthouse, Newton, North Carolina, Office of the Register of Deeds (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).
 Catawba County Records, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).
 Clark, Walter, editor. The State Records of North Carolina. Winston, North Carolina: M. I. and J. C. Stewart, 1895.
 Lincoln County Records, Lincoln County Courthouse, Lincolnton, North Carolina, Office of the Register of Deeds (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	0 0 0	0 0 0	35	38	1/2
NE	0 0 0	0 0 0	81	18	35
SE	0 0 0	0 0 0			
SW	0 0 0	0 0 0			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 8 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
 Survey and Planning Unit

ORGANIZATION: Division of Archives and History DATE: 20 September 1973

STREET AND NUMBER:
 109 East Jones Street

CITY OR TOWN: Raleigh STATE: North Carolina CODE: 37

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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 National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: H. G. Jones
 Title: Director, Division of Archives and History
 Date: 20 September 1973

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: _____

ATTEST: _____

Keeper of The National Register

Date: _____

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L I N C O L N

