

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR

Catawba County Multiple Resource Nomination

MULTIPLE RESOURCE OR THEMATIC NOMINATION

1 NAME

HISTORIC

John A. Lentz House

AND/OR COMMON

John A. Lentz House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

321 Ninth Street NW

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN

Hickory

VICINITY OF

STATE

North Carolina

CODE

037

COUNTY

Catawba

CODE

035

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Dr. and Mrs. Sanford Guttler

STREET & NUMBER

321 Ninth Street NW

CITY, TOWN

Hickory

VICINITY OF

STATE

North Carolina 28601

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Register of Deeds Office

STREET & NUMBER

Catawba County Justice Center

CITY, TOWN

Newton

STATE

North Carolina

6 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Laura A. W. Phillips, Consultant

Historical Research: Michael Hill, Research Branch
Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, N. C.

ORGANIZATION

DATE

June 16, 1983

STREET & NUMBER

637 N. Spring Street

TELEPHONE

919/727-1968

CITY OR TOWN

Winston-Salem

STATE

North Carolina 27101

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The John A. Lentz House in Hickory is a ca. 1890 two-story frame house of late Classical Revival influence. The house appears to have originally (or at least from its early years) consisted of a center hall plan with two rooms over two rooms and a two-story rear ell. An addition and various alterations dating primarily from the third quarter of the twentieth century have changed this appearance somewhat. An unusual brick outbuilding is located behind the house on its tree-shaded lot.

The oldest part of the Lentz House is a two-story structure with brick foundation, weatherboard siding, gable roof with overhanging boxed eaves, and an exterior brick chimney, recently rebuilt, on the south side. First story windows are one-over-one sash with plain surrounds, while those on the second story are two-over-two sash with slightly pedimented surrounds. Dominating the three-bay-wide facade and providing the otherwise simple house with stylistic character is the full-length, two-level front (east) porch. It features Tuscan Doric columns, Doric pilasters where the porch joins the front wall, and balustrades with turned balusters. A shallow hipped roof covers the porch.

The two-story ell continues the same basic detailing as the front of the house. A porch once lined the west two-thirds of the south side of the ell, but this has been partially enclosed for an upstairs bathroom and otherwise remodelled. A handsome sawn-work balustrade which once graced the ell porch has been recycled as a screen divider between the front hall and parlor inside the house. A chamfered wood post remains at the southwest corner of the porch, while a metal pole next to the ell porch steps lends extra support for the bathroom above.

A one-story wing has been added to the north side of the house. It has a broad gable roof with a group of three windows in the gable end, weatherboard siding and one-over-one sash windows. Projecting from the west side of this wing is a screened porch with shed roof.

The interior of the Lentz House has been heavily remodelled. The plan at present consists of a center stair hall flanked by parlor on the south and sitting room on the north, a dining room in the rear ell, and a bedroom, bathroom, laundry and kitchen in the north side addition, all on the first floor, and on the second floor, a bedroom on each side of the hall, an added bathroom at the rear of the hall, and a bedroom in the rear ell. Glass and wood-paneled doors lead from the exterior to the interior. On the interior, five-panel doors prevail. Most door and window casings are symmetrically molded with bulls-eye corner blocks, although the moldings are not consistent throughout the house. Walls and ceilings were originally sheathed with narrow beaded boarding, but now most walls are covered by sheetrock and ceilings by celotex tiles. No original mantels remain. The most noteworthy interior feature which appears to be original is the stair, which rises from west (rear) to east (front) along the north side of the hall. It features a heavy square newel with chamfered corners and vertical channels cut into the four sides, a closed string with molded panels, a molded handrail, heavy turned newels at second floor level, and two types of balusters--angularly carved ones lining the rise of the stairs and more delicate turned ones surrounding the stair opening at second floor level. Another feature which accentuates the stair is the Queen Anne style sash window--with small panes surrounding a larger pane--on the south wall of the hall at the base of the stair.

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**National Register of Historic Places
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Continuation sheet Architectural Description Item number 7

Page 1

Another interior feature of interest which appears to be original is the built-in cupboard and china cabinet in the dining room. Prominent decorative details which are not original include the paneled wall and mantel in the sitting room, created from doors and a mantel taken from a house in Chatham County, and the sawnwork screen dividing the hall from the parlor, which was created from the wawnwork balustrade that once lined the ell porch. These and most other alterations were made by previous owners Jake and Janet Schoonderwoerd during the 1960s and 1970s.

Located behind (west of) the Lentz House is an unusual one-story brick outbuilding laid in five-to-one common bond. Its date of construction is not known. The shed roof extends in a wide overhang on the front (east side) of the building, where it is supported by large wooden braces. The northern third of the building consists of one large garage-type opening while the southern two-thirds are divided into several rooms. Two six (horizontal)-panel doors and two rectangular barred window openings are on the east side. All have segmental-arched brick lintels. On the rear of the building are three openings of more simple design. On the interior, the brick walls and wooden ceiling joists are left exposed.

The Lentz House is located on Ninth Street high above street grade. The house is well shaded by large oak trees, while other oak, pine and dogwood trees border the property on the south and west. Azaleas and other shrubs add to the landscaping of the lot. The house is located in a residential neighborhood just north of a commercial and light industrial area of Hickory NW.

The structure, of course, is closely related to the surrounding environment. Archaeological remains, such as trash pits, wells, and structural remains, which may be present, can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the structure. Information concerning use patterns, social standing and mobility, as well as structural details are often only evident in the archaeological record. Therefore, archaeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the structure. At this time no investigation has been done to discover these remains, but it is probable that they exist, and this should be considered in any development of the property.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

_____ NATIONAL

_____ STATE

 X

_____ LOCAL

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 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

Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The J. A. Lentz House, built around 1890, is a two-story frame house at 321 9th Street in Hickory. Its builder, John Albert Lentz (1860-1925), was a key figure in the industrial growth and residential development of the town in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He founded the Hickory Novelty Company, a manufacturer of shipping crates and building materials, and later operated a large lumberyard. In 1911 and 1912 he served as Hickory's mayor. In his capacity as a director of the First Building and Loan Association of Hickory, Lentz encouraged local home ownership, especially in the black community. Jake Schoonderwoerd (1928-), who came to North Carolina from Holland as an infant, has had a career remarkably similar to that of J. A. Lentz. Schoonderwoerd, who owned the house from 1964 to 1980, has been associated since 1964 with two companies which manufacture packaging products. He has also been active in local political, civic, and church activities.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

- A. The John A. Lentz House is associated with the residential and industrial development of Hickory during the late 19th and 20th centuries.
- B. The John A. Lentz House is associated with John A. Lentz, prominent developer, who encouraged and fostered local home ownership, especially in the black community; and Jake Schoonderwoerd, an immigrant to North Carolina from Holland, who was active in manufacturing and local civic, political and church circles in Hickory.

See continuation sheet.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,7	468120	3,9545,8,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C			

B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property consists of tract 2 in block 11 on Catawba County tax map 31 H, as outlined in red on the accompanying map. It consists of the frame house and its brick outbuilding and the city lot of less than one acre on which they stand.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
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Continuation sheet HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Item number 8 Page 1

The John Albert Lentz House is located on a slightly sloping hillside, surrounded by large oaks, at 321 9th Street NW in Hickory. The Victorian-era, two-story frame house was built around 1890. It features a full-length, two-story front porch with classical columns and balustrade. Once through the front door the visitor enters an extended foyer leading to a large staircase. To the left is the formal living room and to the right the den. Straight ahead is the kitchen and master bedroom; other bedrooms are upstairs. Much of the original interior work in the house remains intact. Particularly notable is a mantel with inlaid Delft tiles. A one-and-one-half-story ell was added to the north gable end of the house sometime after the original section was finished. That addition, which includes a dining room and bath, was probably built around 1915. The only remaining outbuilding on the property was built about the same time. Situated about thirty feet behind the house, the structure originally built as a garage is now used primarily as a tool shed. The primary historical significance of the J. A. Lentz House derives from its association with Lentz, a prominent Hickory business and civic leader at the turn of the century. His manufacturing firms were among the precursors of today's furniture industry in Catawba County.

John Albert Lentz (2 February 1860-8 April 1925) rose from the humblest of beginnings to a position of relative power and prosperity in the community. The young Lentz took the nickname "Groundhog" from the day on which he was born. His first years were spent in the Rowan County community of Rockwell. He was orphaned after his father was killed in the Civil War and his mother died soon thereafter. Around 1872 he moved to Hickory where he was taken in by the T. I. Lynn family. His education was gained at Catawba College in Newton to which he walked from Hickory. While he was in school he also worked in various manufacturing firms, mostly lumber mills and woodworking plants.¹ On August 3, 1881, at the age of twenty-one, he was married for the first time, to Mary Eliza (Molly) Wiley (November 1852-18 June 1916). Her family had moved to Catawba County from Caswell County in 1878. J. A. and Molly Lentz had five children, born between 1882 and 1893: Eugene, Frank, Winnie, John, and Frances. All of them lived their full lives in Catawba County, except for John who died in infancy. Lentz's father-in-law, F. A. Wiley, was instrumental in getting him started in business. He also provided the couple with the land for their first home.² That town lot was valued at \$200 for tax purposes in 1882. Lentz continued to acquire land in the 1880s but did not purchase the tract in the vicinity of the present-day house until 1890.³ The street address of the property has changed at least twice since the house was built. At the turn of the century and as late as 1907 the route was known as Lentz Street after its principal property owner. By the 1920s the streets had been numbered and the Lentz's address was 1329 20th Street. In the late 1940s they were renumbered and the house was given its present address, 321 9th Street NW.⁴

Although the railroad reached Hickory by 1860, economic growth and industrial development was delayed for over twenty years longer.⁵ J. A. Lentz, who was twenty years old in 1880, played an important role in that growth. He got his start in business by owning sawmills, the operation of which he was familiar with from his work as a teenager. He then established the Hickory Novelty Company, initially to manufacture tobacco hogsheads and shipping crates for apples and cabbage. Eventually his production was widened to include every class of building material, but most particularly sashes, doors, and blinds. Lentz headed the operation until 1918 when he sold it to the competing firm of Hutton and Bourbonnais and the name was changed to the Hickory

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National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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date entered

Continuation sheet HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Item number 8 Page 2

Manufacturing Company. He then established the J. A. Lentz Lumber Company which he operated for the rest of his life.⁶ The Hickory Novelty (later Manufacturing) Company, along with Hutton and Bourbonnais and the Piedmont Wagon Company, was located in a four-block-square area two blocks south of Lentz's house. The area was bounded by 10th Avenue, 12th Avenue, 20th Street, and 22nd Street, and bisected diagonally by railway tracks.⁷

Lentz had a record of civic, community, and political service in addition to a successful business career. He served as Hickory's mayor in 1911 and 1912; he had several terms as an alderman and school board members. He was an active member of Hickory's First Methodist Church. In 1915 Lentz was a founder and later a vice-president of the Hickory Daily Record. Around 1895 he became a director of the First Building and Loan Association of Hickory (in time he was affiliated with three other banks). In his position with the loan company Lentz helped an estimated 500 residents of Hickory build their own houses. He is said to have made a special effort to foster home ownership in the black community, at times even loaning them money out of his own pocket if they were unable to meet payments and about to lose their house.⁸ Following the death of Molly Lentz in 1916 Lentz married Blanche Finges in 1918. They had two children of their own, John Jr., born in 1919, and Blanche, born in 1924.⁹ One year after the birth of their second child, on April 7, 1925, J. A. Lentz fell from a ladder while inspecting a newly constructed dwelling for the loan company. He died the next morning. He was sixty-five years old. Following his death a letter to the editor of a Hickory newspaper declared that the Negroes in Hickory had lost one of their very best friends.¹⁰ By the terms of his will, which he had made out in 1921, Lentz left his residence and an adjacent twenty-five acres to his wife and young son John Jr. His four older children received houses and town lots elsewhere in Hickory.¹¹

After 1925 Lentz's lumber company was operated by his son Frank and daughter Frances. Eventually they sold the operation. Frank Lentz then operated a grocery store; his sister Frances worked for the county welfare department and later as truant officer for the Hickory schools. E. W. (Gene) Lentz, the oldest of the children, was chief of police in Hickory for twenty-five years.¹² Their stepmother, Blanche Lentz, sold the house to Frank L. Fox and R. Gordon Messick in 1940 for \$100 "and valuable considerations." The deed indicated that the house and lot were part of the "Hillcrest" or "Lentz subdivision." The two Hickory men sold the property in 1942 for a similar consideration.¹³ The buyers were Virginia Abernethy and her daughters Helen, Josephine, and Louise, all of them apparently widowed or unmarried. They owned and lived in the house from 1942 to 1964. Josephine and Louise Abernethy were schoolteachers. Their sister Helen was a secretary at Shuford Mills.¹⁴ It was likely at Shuford Mills that Helen Abernethy met the man who became the next owner of the house.

Jake Schoonderwoerd (1928-) bought the house from the Abernethys in 1964.¹⁵ Like J. A. Lentz before him Schoonderwoerd is a successful self-made businessman and active civic leader. Born in Holland, he came to Enka, North Carolina, with his parents before his first birthday. After serving in the Air Force from 1946 to 1949 Schoonderwoerd enrolled at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. There he met Janet Ellington whom he married on December 16, 1950. Today they have three daughters, Dee, Dana, and Lisa. After he and his wife were graduated Schoonderwoerd worked for a short time at Western Electric in Burlington. In 1953 they moved to Hickory where they have now lived for thirty years. He was employed as personnel manager at Shuford Mills for

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

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received

date entered

Continuation sheet

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Item number 8

Page 3

eleven years. In 1964 he joined Hickory Paper Box Company. He has remained with that company and an allied firm, Plastic Packaging, and today heads both operations.¹⁶ Ironically J. A. Lentz had managed a packaging company almost one hundred years earlier.

Like Lentz, Schoonderwoerd has contributed much to his community through public service. Although he has not held elective office he has been active in local Republican politics. He was a charter member of the Hickory Public Housing Authority (again an interest akin to Lentz's). In past years he has headed the Hickory Chamber of Commerce as well as professional groups like the Piedmont Personnel Association and the Western Piedmont Safety Council. He has served as president of the local Kiwanis and Toastmaster clubs and headed the local United Fund campaign. Both he and his wife have been active in the Church of the Ascension, Episcopal. It was there in 1973 that the Schoonderwoerds met the widow of the builder of their house. Blanche Lentz, ninety-two years old at the time, has since died. Mrs. Schoonderwoerd was found of decorating the interior of the old house, much of it with antiques from her family's Chatham County homestead. Her husband did some minor remodeling.¹⁷ In 1980 the Schoonderwoerds, their daughters grown, decided to sell the property and move to a new house a few blocks east. The present owners of the J. A. Lentz House are Sanford Guttler, a Hickory doctor, and his wife Linda.¹⁸

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National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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received

date entered

Continuation sheet HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Item number 8

Page 4

NOTES

¹J. Weston Clinard, Clinard Looks Back: A Compilation of Short Stories Concerning Early Days in Hickory (Hickory: Hickory Printing Co., 1962), 132.

²Twelfth Census, 1900, Population Schedule; Hickory Daily Record, 1 September 1965.

³Catawba County Tax Records, North Carolina State Archives; Catawba County Deed Book 39, p. 116, and Deed Book 49, p. 110.

⁴Sanborn Map Company, Hickory, North Carolina (New York: Sanborn Map Co.), 1896, 1902, 1907, 1919, 1925, 1931. Property in the vicinity of the Lentz House was mapped by the Sanborn Company as early as 1907. However, the Lentz House itself was not shown on a Sanborn map until 1925. On the 1925 and 1931 maps the house appears in its present form, with the ell and garage in place. As shown on those maps the main house and ell had shingle roofs while the porch had a tin roof and the garage a composition roof.

⁵Charles J. Preslar, Jr. (ed.), A History of Catawba County (Salisbury: Rowan Printing Co. for the Catawba County Historical Association, 1954), 169.

⁶Clinard, Clinard Looks Back, 132; Hickory Daily Record, 1 September 1965; Levi Branson (comp.), Branson's North Carolina Business Directory (Raleigh: Levi Branson), 1896, p. 168 and 1897, p. 168.

⁷Sanborn maps, 1896, 1902, 1907, 1919, 1925, 1931.

⁸Preslar, History of Catawba County, 354; Clinard, Clinard Looks Back, 132.

⁹Catawba County Marriage Records and Vital Statistics, North Carolina State Archives.

¹⁰Hickory Daily Record, 8 April 1925; Clinard, Clinard Looks Back, 133.

¹¹Catawba County Will Book 4, p. 373. Lentz's house and twenty-five acres constituted a small farm. As with most people of the day who had the room, Lentz regularly kept a few horses, cows, and hogs. Lentz's residence was listed as a "house" in the 1900 census but as a "farm" in 1910. However, after Lentz died in 1925, the lot was reduced in size. Hickory's growth had precluded any chance of continuing to farm on the property. In 1935 Mrs. Lentz's lot was valued at \$1,500 with an additional seventeen acres valued at \$13,000. Catawba County Tax Records, North Carolina State Archives; Twelfth and Thirteenth Censuses, 1900, 1910, Population Schedules.

¹²Clinard, Clinard Looks Back, 133.

¹³Catawba County Deed Book 314, p. 201 and Deed Book 336, p. 247.

¹⁴Miller's Hickory, North Carolina City Directory (Asheville: Southern Directory Co.), 1943/44, p. 103; 1947/48, p. 103; and 1961/62, pp. 103-104.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Item number 8

Page 5

¹⁵Catawba County Deed Book 774, p. 223.

¹⁶Hickory Daily Record, 7 September 1967.

¹⁷Telephone interview with Janet Schoonderwoerd, 5 April 1983; Hickory News, 21 June 1973; Hickory Daily Record, 7 September 1965; and Mullin-Kille and Daily Record Hickory, North Carolina City Directory (Chillicothe, Ohio: Mullin-Kille, 1970), 1405.

¹⁸Catawba County Deed Book 1202, p. 398.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

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Item number 9

Page 1

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Schoonderwoerd, Janet. Telephone interview. 5 April 1983.

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