

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 Sherrill, Miles Alexander House
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number W side SR 1849, 0.1 mi. S of jct. w/ SR 1848 N/A not for publication
city, town Sherrills Ford X vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Catawba code 035 zip code 28673

3. Classification

| | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Ownership of Property | Category of Property | Number of Resources within Property | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | Contributing | Noncontributing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-local | <input type="checkbox"/> district | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> buildings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-State | <input type="checkbox"/> site | _____ | _____ sites |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal | <input type="checkbox"/> structure | _____ | _____ structures |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> object | _____ | _____ objects |
| | | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> Total |

Name of related multiple property listing:
Historic & Architectural Resources of Catawba County, N.C.

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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.

William S. Piu _____ March 8, 1990
Signature of certifying official Date

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
 Domestic: single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
 Domestic: single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (enter categories from instructions)

Stick/Eastlake

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls wood

roof asphalt

other wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The **Miles Alexander Sherrill House** is an extremely intact two-story frame, Stick style cottage, unusual for Catawba County. Built in 1886, the Sherrill House was designed by the county's first known architect, Charles Henry Lester, and is one of only three county houses remaining which are known to have been designed or remodelled by him. (The others are the T. F. Connor House, listed on the National Register as part of the Terrell Historic District, and the Neill-Turner-Lester House near Sherrills Ford, being nominated for the National Register with this Multiple Property Listing.) In his design for the Sherrill House, Lester relied heavily on plates in Palliser's Model Homes (1878).

The Sherrill House is located on flat terrain in rural southeast Catawba County near Sherrills Ford. A drive leads from SR 1849 to the east side of the house on a partially cleared lot which retains numerous large trees and daffodils and other flowers scattered throughout the yard. Heavy woods border the back yard west of the house.

The **Miles Alexander Sherrill House** ("A" on the attached Sketch Map) is characterized on the exterior by irregular massing, steeply pitched gable and shed roofs, German siding with an overlay of vertical and horizontal boards from which its Stick style appearance is derived, multiple small porches with chamfered or turned posts and brackets, a stone pier foundation now infilled with brick, and four-over-four and one-over-one sash windows, mostly in pairs. A one-story added ell extends from the west side of the house. The north side of the house originally functioned as the primary facade when the road ran along this side of the house. With present location of SR 1849 on the east side of the house, that side has become the main facade. However, both north and east sides have entrance porches, and each of these sides could serve comfortably as the front. The east side is the more interesting of the two, with its three-sided bay room with projecting gabled second story and symmetrically-placed shed-roofed porches on either side. The south and west elevations are of lesser interest with two ells and two simple porches.

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Catawba County, N.C.

es. Other exterior features include two interior brick chimneys with corbelled caps, shed dormers, decoratively sawn gable rake boards, rafter ends and corner brackets, sawtooth-patterned trim, and panels of diagonal boarding serving as a contrast to the German siding.

The interior of the Sherrill House has a plan as asymmetrical as the exterior. The north entrance opens to a stairhall with stairs ascending along the east wall. On the east side of the hall is the parlor, isolated from the other rooms. The sitting room and dining room are situated back-to-back on the west side of the hall, and the modernized kitchen on the south side of the house is entered from the rear of the hall. Porch entrances on east and west lead to the kitchen. West of the dining room is a bathroom which may originally also have been part of the porch, and west of the sitting room is the west ell with its hobby and laundry rooms and south porch. The second floor has three rooms -- a bedroom over the parlor, a bedroom over the sitting room and a bathroom (originally a bedroom) over the dining room.

The interior detailing of the Sherrill House is well designed and coordinated throughout the house. The front (north) door with its five chamfered panels sets the stage for what lies within. The simple but handsome stairway features a heavy square newel with molded base and cap and chamfered shaft with diamond-shaped cut-outs and applied sawnwork decoration. The handrail, which rises slightly to form a ridge along its upper side makes a hairpin turn at the stair landing. All five fireplaces are located in the corners of the rooms, and four project outward three dimensionally. Four of the mantels survive, however, the fifth, upstairs mantel was stolen when the house was vacant. The mantels in the parlor and master bedroom are the most massive, with chamfered paneling, heavy molding under the shelf, and a central keystone. They are nearly identical, except that the parlor mantel has a segmental-arched frieze while the bedroom mantel does not. The mantels of the dining room and sitting room are identical. Each has an arched frieze, narrow corner pilasters, and heavy sawnwork brackets supporting the shelf. The ghost marks from the missing mantel show that it was the only one in the house that was flat rather than three dimensional. Other interior features of note include four-panel doors with single face molded casings, recessed shelving in the dining room, a heavy crown molding in the parlor built up from beaded boarding with border molding, and more narrow crown molding in the other

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Miles Alexander Sherrill House
Catawba County, N.C.

rooms. The walls and ceilings were originally sheathed in circular-sawn flush boarding, and some of these, as in the parlor, were covered with wallpaper. At present the parlor awaits new wallpaper, some rooms have been left with the flush boarding exposed but painted, while other rooms have been sheetrocked over the boarding.

Two outbuildings accompany the house. Behind the house (west) is a nineteenth century one-room ~~schoolhouse~~ (C, noncontributing) which was associated with the black community of Catawba County. It was purchased and moved from a site ten miles away by the present owners within the past year. It is currently being renovated by the owners as an artist's studio. East of the house is a frame ~~garage~~ (D, noncontributing) which was perhaps previously a wagon shed. It was probably built in the early twentieth century.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Architecture

1886

1886

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Lester, Charles Henry

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Summary

The Miles Alexander Sherrill House is an important 1886 Stick-Style house which is one of few remaining in the county which were designed by Catawba County's first architect, Charles Henry Lester. The house is unusual for the county, with its asymmetrical massing and unique, three dimensional corner mantels. Of particular note is Lester's apparent use of the book Palliser's Model Homes, published by Palliser, Palliser & Company, Architects of Bridgeport, Connecticut, near Lester's own hometown of New London. The house is significant under Criterion C in association with the Property Type "Houses of Catawba County: Postbellum (1865-1900)" as an example of a good Stick Style design, a rare example of a patternbook house in Catawba County, and because of its association with Lester.

See continuation sheet

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Miles Alexander Sherrill House
Catawba County, N.C.

Historical Background

The Miles Alexander Sherrill House is a Victorian-era structure located about one mile north of the Sherrills Ford community in southeast Catawba County. It was built in 1886 for Sherrill, a locally prominent miller and farmer, by Charles Henry Lester, the first known trained architect in the county. As such it is one of the few private homes still standing for which Lester was wholly responsible.

The original landing on the Catawba River known as Sherrills Ford was covered by Lake Norman in 1963, as were the sites of a number of historic houses in the area. Both the landing and the community a few miles west of it were named for Adam Sherrill, the pioneer who crossed the Catawba River in 1747. Sherrill had previously been in the Virginia (now West Virginia) area. The historian Robert W. Ramsey made this assessment of the family's importance to the settlement of the frontier:

The most picturesque, and probably the most significant, of the early settlers on the Catawba was the Sherrill family. Not only were the Sherrills trail-blazers in the settlement of western North Carolina but they played a role in opening up the Susquehanna Valley.¹

With Adam Sherrill at the 1747 crossing were his wife and eight sons. One of the sons, William, was the progenitor of the greater part of the Catawba County clan of Sherrills.

Miles Alexander Sherrill (1848-1916) was part of the fifth generation of Sherrills in the area. Although primarily a farmer and mill operator through most of his life, Sherrill listed his occupation in 1870 as that of shoemaker. In that year he married Elizabeth (Lizzie) Brotherton (1852-1937). The first of their nine children was born in 1872. As late as 1900 six of the nine, along with several grandchildren, lived in the house.² The Sherrills were Methodists and members of Hopewell Church.³ Between 1870 and 1885 M. A. Sherrill was regularly taxed on 100-140 acres plus one or two horses and mules and a few head of cattle and sheep. His farming operation was not a large one. Though no further information is available regarding his plantings it is reasonable to assume that, like other farmers in Catawba County, he grew some corn, wheat, oats, and perhaps cotton.⁴ In the

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Catawba County, N.C.

mid-1880s, Sherrill began investing in several local grist and sawmill operations. In combination with four others he bought five acres plus a mill north of Rehobeth Church in 1885. In the following year he bought out the interests of his partners in the mill. A similar investment in a mill on Littens Creek was made in 1890.⁵

On January 2, 1886, Sherrill bought the property upon which he built his house. He paid I. F. Brown \$500 for the 57-acre tract. With that purchase his taxable acreage rose from 140 to 197 acres with a value of \$2,000. Sherrill was at that time thirty-eight years old. The size of his landholdings remained constant until 1894 when he bought eighteen acres on Mountain Creek.⁶ Sherrill is believed to have supplied from his sawmill the lumber used in his and several other area houses in the late nineteenth century. His collaborator in the building of his house was Charles Henry Lester (1849-1940).

M. A. Sherrill died in 1916 at age sixty-eight. In the year before his death he owned 195 acres valued at \$2,243. He was also taxed on one house, six cattle, two hogs, a carriage, tools, furniture, and other personal property. All of his property then passed to his widow Elizabeth. In 1935 she was taxed on 228 acres with a value of \$6,500. Elizabeth Sherrill died on April 21, 1937, at the age of eighty-five.⁷ By the time of her death several of the Sherrill heirs had died. Thus it was up to the remaining children and grandchildren to settle the estate. Those heirs were scattered across the state of North Carolina, living in Iredell, Guilford, Caldwell, and Scotland counties as well as in Catawba County. All of them agreed to relinquish their claim to the homeplace and transfer all interest in it to their sister Nona and her husband Joseph Fesper Gabriel. The property, a total of 70 7/10 acres as determined by a new survey in 1938, was sold to them for \$800.⁸ Gabriel, whose family had also lived in the Sherrills Ford area for several generations, kept some of the land in cultivation. He died on January 22, 1943. Nona Sherrill Gabriel, who lived for over thirty more years, continued to pay tax on the seventy-plus acres valued at \$3,270 in 1955 and \$3,638 in 1965.⁹ Her heir, Thomas Gabriel, became the owner of the land and house in 1981. In 1982 he sold the house and a 4.68 acre lot to Gary and Pat Mauney who are currently living there and are in the final stages of renovating the house.¹⁰

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Miles Alexander Sherrill House
Catawba County, N.C.

Architectural Context

The Miles Alexander Sherrill House is one of a small number of surviving houses in Catawba County designed by local architect Charles Henry Lester. Lester (1849-1940), generally regarded as Catawba County's first architect, came to the area from New London, Connecticut, in 1872. Five years later he married Susan Turner and settled on the Catawba River about three miles from where Sherrill lived. Lester was responsible for building the Monbo cotton mills on the Catawba River, the Sherrills Ford Elementary School, and the Hub Theatre in Hickory, as well as several private homes in the area.¹¹

The Sherrill House is apparently a pattern book design, quite unusual for a county dominated by vernacular domestic architecture. The similarities between the Sherrill House and plates in Palliser's Model Homes (1878) are too striking to have been coincidental. C. H. Lester probably had a first-hand familiarity with buildings designed by the Pallisers of Bridgeport, Connecticut, and doubtless had access to one or more of their published books of designs. The plan of the central core of the Sherrill House is nearly identical to Plate XI -- the Residence of F. Egge, Seaside Park, Bridgeport, Connecticut -- in Model Homes. A drawing of the parlor of this house shows it to be more elaborate than at the Sherrill House, but includes doors with chamfered panels similar to the front door of the Sherrill House. The exterior of the Egge House, shown in Plate X, is a more elaborate rendition of the Stick style than is the Sherrill House, but shows the same arrangement of projecting bay with shed porches on either side, similar brackets, shed-roofed dormer and decorative chimney. The north side projecting bay of the Sherrill House is more closely related to that shown in Plate XII, the Residence of Rev. Dr. Marble, Newton, Connecticut. The description of the Egge House (that one most like the Sherrill House) reads in part:

This is the most charming Cottage we have ever seen... This Cottage is painted a warm red, the trimmings being darker than the ground work, and the chamfers and sunk work are picked out in black; the sashes are painted dark yellow, giving the whole a most striking and effective appearance... It is the Cottage par-excellence....¹²

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Miles Alexander Sherrill House
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Interestingly, although the Sherrill House is now painted light yellow with white trim, a circa 1900 photograph of the north facade shows that the trim was painted a dark color at that time, and physical evidence on the house shows that the trim had been painted a dark rust red. Referring to the corner fireplaces, the description of the Marble House says, "The corner fireplace between Parlor and Dining-room is a feature we indulge in to a great extent in these days of economy..."¹³ Apparently architect Lester borrowed liberally from the Pallisers while at the same time making modifications that he thought appropriate.

The Sherrill House is believed to be one of only two remaining houses in the county for which Lester was wholly responsible (the other being the T.F. Connor House, part of the Terrell Historic District). Lester's own home, the Neill-Turner-Lester House (also being nominated as part of this Multiple Property Listing) was a Federal-era house which he extensively enlarged and renovated.

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Miles Alexander Sherrill House
Catawba County, N.C.

FOOTNOTES

¹Robert W. Ramsey, Carolina Cradle: Settlement of the North Carolina Frontier, 1747-1762 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1964), 47. In 1929 a plaque bearing an inscription commemorating the crossing by the Sherrills was dedicated at the Sherrills Ford landing. William L. Sherrill, Annals of Lincoln County, North Carolina (Baltimore: Regional Publishing Co., 1967; originally published, 1937).

²Ninth and Twelfth Censuses, 1870 and 1900, Population Schedules.

³In 1903 M. A. Sherrill acted as a trustee for Hopewell Methodist Church in respect to the church's purchase of additional land. Catawba County Deed Book 66, p. 300.

⁴Catawba County Tax Records, North Carolina State Archives. In 1884 corn was the leading crop in Catawba County with over 21,000 acres under cultivation. Considerably fewer acres were planted in wheat, oats and cotton. Levi Branson (ed.), Branson's North Carolina Business Directory (Raleigh: Levi Branson, 1884), 195.

⁵Catawba County Deed Book 24, p. 198; Deed Book 32, p. 358; and Deed Book 64, p. 324.

⁶Catawba County Deed Book 64, p. 323; Catawba County Tax Records, North Carolina State Archives.

⁷Catawba County Vital Statistics and Tax Records, North Carolina State Archives.

⁸Catawba County Deed Book 336, p. 461.

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

¹⁰Catawba County Deed Book 1247, p. 296, and Deed Book 1253, p. 849.

¹¹On Charles Henry Lester and his impact on Catawba County architecture, see Hickory Daily Record, 14 July 1965, and Newton News-Enterprise, 14 May 1979.

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Miles Alexander Sherrill House
Catawba County, N.C.

¹²Palliser's Model Homes (Bridgeport, Conn.: Palliser, Palliser & Co., Architects, 1878), pp. 44, 46.

¹³Palliser's Model Homes, p. 48.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Raleigh: Levi Branson, 1884.

Catawba County Deeds, Tax Records, Vital Statistics, and Wills.
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Newton News-Enterprise, 14 May 1979.

Newton Observer, 4 June 1954.

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Co., Architects, 1878.

Preslar, Charles Jefferson, ed. History of Catawba County.
Salisbury: Rowan Printing Company, 1954.

Ramsey, Robert W. Carolina Cradle: Settlement of the North
Carolina Frontier, 1747-1762. Chapel Hill: The University
of North Carolina Press, 1964.

Sherrill, William L. Annals of Lincoln County, North Carolina.
Baltimore: Regional Publishing Co., 1967 (originally pub-
lished 1937).

United States. Ninth through Twelfth Censuses, 1870-1900:
Agricultural and Population Schedules.

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Historic & Architectural Resources
of Catawba County, N.C.

- 1) Miles Alexander Sherrill House
 - 2) Sherrills Ford vicinity, North Carolina
 - 5) North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, N.C.
-
- A.
 - 3) Laura Phillips
 - 4) March 1983
 - 6) House (A), west
 - B.
 - 3) Laura Phillips
 - 4) March 1983
 - 6) House, south
 - C.
 - 3) Laura Phillips
 - 4) March 1983
 - 6) House, east
 - D.
 - 3) Laura Phillips
 - 4) March 1983
 - 6) House, east
 - E.
 - 3) Laura Phillips
 - 4) March 1983
 - 6) House interior, dining room
 - F.
 - 3) Laura Phillips
 - 4) March 1983
 - 6) House interior, living room
 - G.
 - 3) Laura Phillips
 - 4) March 1983
 - 6) House interior, master bedroom
 - H.
 - 3) Laura Phillips
 - 4) March 1983
 - 6) House interior, parlor
 - I.
 - 3) Laura Phillips
 - 4) March 1983
 - 6) House interior, stair, newell post

NOTE: The photos used in this nomination were taken in March 1983. All resources have been thoroughly field checked by Barbara Kooiman in 1989 and have been determined unchanged from their appearance and condition portrayed in these pre-1989 photos.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acres of property 4.65 acres.

UTM References

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

All of lot 5 in block 5, on Sheet 3X-MC of Catawba County tax maps.

See continuation sheet

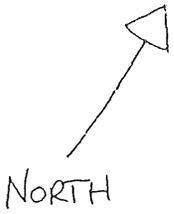
Boundary Justification

Historic site includes the lot currently associated with the property. The farm land historically associated with the house is no longer part of the current house property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

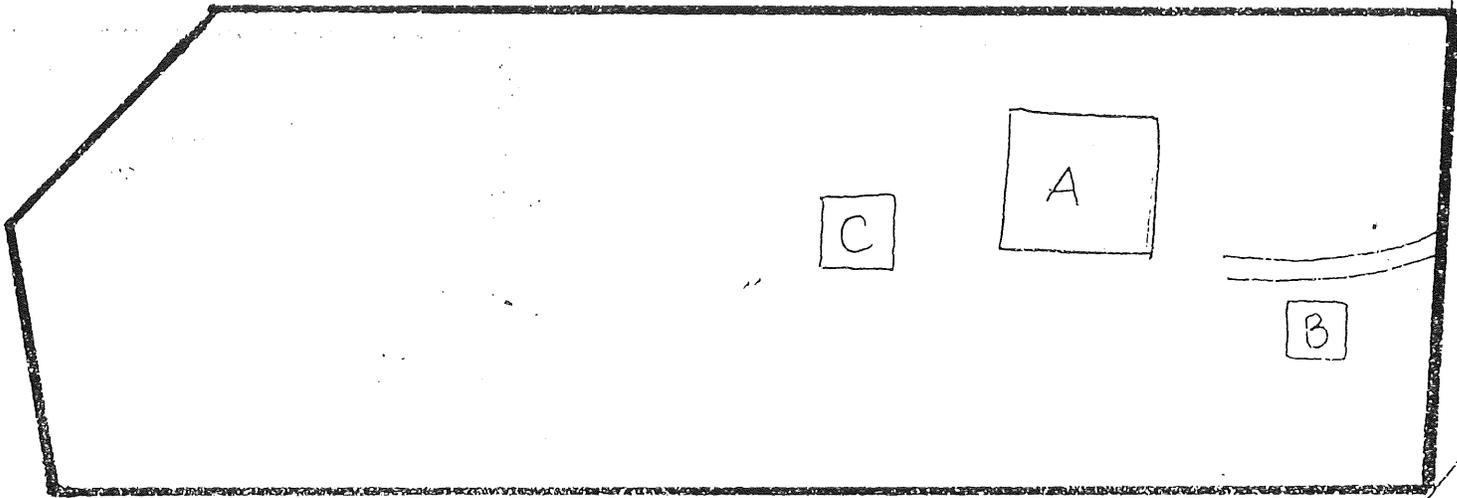
name/title Barbara Kooiman, compiler; Laura A. W. Phillips, description; Michael Hill, history
organization Catawba County Historical Association, Inc. date _____
street & number Rt. 1, Box 76 AB telephone 704/256-3040
city or town Conover, state N.C. zip code 28613



MILES ALEXANDER SHERRILL HOUSE

Location

Catawba County, N.C.
Sherrills Ford vicinity
Section 3 MC, Block 3, Lot 5



Buildings

A - M.A. Sherrill House (C)

B - Garage (NC)

C - Schoolhouse (NC)

C = contributing
NC = noncontributing

Scale

1" = 100'

SR # 1849

Map Drawn by B. Kociman, May 1989



40°
3946
3945
3944
3943000 N.

CATAWBA QUAD
ZONE 17

MILES ALEXANDER
← SHERRILL HOUSE
E - 499300
N - 5942360
35° 37' 30"

496 2' 30" 497 498 ● ★ U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1973-516-080/6
499000m. E. 81° 00'

1 MILE
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ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------|--|-------|
| Primary highway, hard surface | ————— | Light-duty road, hard or improved surface | ————— |
| Secondary highway, hard surface | ————— | Unimproved road | ----- |
| ○ Interstate Route | ○ U. S. Route | ○ State Route | |

4855 II SW
(LAKE NORMAN
NORTH)



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

CATAWBA, N.C.
N3537.5—W8100/7.5

1970

AMS 4755 II NE—SERIES V842

