

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: North Carolina	
COUNTY: Craven	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Blades House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
602 Middle Street (First Congressional District, Hon. Walter B. Jones)

CITY OR TOWN:
New Bern

STATE: North Carolina CODE: 37 COUNTY: Craven CODE: 049

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<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) _____ _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Mrs. Grace M. Blades

STREET AND NUMBER:
602 Middle Street

CITY OR TOWN: New Bern STATE: North Carolina CODE: 37

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Craven County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
302 Broad Street

CITY OR TOWN: New Bern 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 type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Blades House, rendered in the Queen Anne style, is essentially a two-and-a-half-story frame dwelling under a hip roof. Raised on a brick foundation, the house is a delightful conglomeration of turrets, bow and bay windows, round-headed and circular dormers, and paneled chimney stacks, all of which break erratically from the facades. The contours of the house are outlined by a one-story porch that follows around the south and west facades.

Splayed stone steps at the southwest corner of the porch lead to the main doorway which is flanked by engaged fluted Corinthian columns on pedestals. The columns carry a molded three-centered arch which encloses a leaded fanlight. The double door contains two long glazed panels above two square solid ones which are surrounded by egg-and-dart molding. The flat roof of the porch rests on a freely-formed entablature which features acanthus modillions and is supported by paired and tripled Corinthian columns like those flanking the entrance. Curious paneled blocks terminating in stylized scrolls appear between the capitals and the entablature. The cornices of the various turrets and pedimented bay and bow sections are punctuated by acanthus modillions like those on the porch. Most of the major corners of the house and the protruding sections are marked by pilasters. The windows of the bays and turrets feature engaged columns or pilasters. Regardless of the vertical treatment, molded entablatures are carried across the window heads. Window size and grouping varies throughout with frequent use of stained and diamond-paned leaded glass in the transoms.

The turret on the southeastern corner has an open loggia at the third level formed by pairs of Tuscan columns on pedestals, which support the octagonal conical roof with its delicate cast-iron finial. A circular turret, three stories high with a conical roof, rises on the southwestern corner above the entrance. The modillion cornice which outlines the main roof line continues around the turret beneath a splayed pent roof which occurs at the juncture of the second and third levels. On the south facade, between the turrets, a demi-octagonal pavilion two stories high, projects from the wall. It has a full pediment with a recessed opening featuring a window between Tuscan colonettes. Behind and to the east of the pediment is an unusual dormer. Its semicircular arched opening, outlined with a heavy molded architrave, is flanked by paneled pedestals which support a turned ramped balustrade with vase finials.

The west facade features a two-story bow window protected by a large superimposed pedimented portico. Both levels of the portico are supported by Corinthian columns. A ramped balustrade like that used on the south dormer, passes between the columns at the second level. Originally this balustrade continued along the porch roof on the south and west facades. In the center of the pediment, pilasters divide a three-part window. A leaded eyelid opening pierces the north slope of the gable. Dissimilar dormers flank the pediment. The south one features a heavy molded semicircular arch which springs from engaged Tuscan columns. On the north side, the dormer is circular and has an acanthus keystone.

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7. A

The irregularity of the exterior of the Blades house serves as an introduction to the plan. On the first floor, eight rooms encircle, or radiate from, a stair hall in the center of the house, which connects with the entrance hall in the southeast corner. The stair hall, the most dramatic room, features a medieval-style chimney piece with a massive brick fireplace and corbeled overmantel. On the east side of the hall, opposite the fireplace, a grand quarter-turn-with-landing stair rises to the second floor. A pair of paneled newel posts enriched with bands of molding and attenuated engaged twisted colonnettes is crowned by a carved foliated capital. The fascia of the landing forms the back of a seat built in the outside angle of the stair. The stair-ends are paneled as is the triangular spandrel under the second flight. A molded handrail ramps and eases over the turned balusters with the profile being followed on the opposite wall by a paneled wainscot. This wainscot, enriched with bands of cable and astragal moldings, is used in the stair hall as well as in the south rooms (the entrance hall, the sitting room, and the dining room). A cornice consisting of modillions outlined with cable molding above a band of egg-and-dart molding and a course of dentils is used consistently throughout the first floor rooms. All door and window openings on the first floor are flanked by paneled pilasters standing on the wainscot which breaks out to form pedestals. The pilasters support a full entablature above each opening.

The dining room, which is even more elaborate, is finished with carved oak and features a built-in cupboard and chimney piece with paneled overmantel. The cupboard, flanked by attenuated engaged Corinthian columns, is fabricated in three parts. The bottom space bows and contains paneled drawers and doors. The midsection was designed as a serving area and the top contains shelves protected with three glazed doors, of which the center is bowed. Between the stair hall and the entrance hall is a three-centered transverse arch. The arch, which springs from carved acanthus corbels above a single fluted Corinthian column, is enriched with a paneled soffit and paneled spandrels. There are sliding doors between the west parlor and the entrance hall and between the stair hall and the dining room and sitting room.

In the west parlor, the fireplace situated in the southeast corner is flanked by lion-headed engaged terms. The entablature has a foliated frieze, the pattern of which is repeated on the shafts of the terms. The woodwork in this room, although painted now, is mahogany underneath. The two north-eastern rooms have birds-eye maple woodwork, and the entrance hall, sitting room and stair hall are walnut. The kitchen area which occupies the major portion of the east side of the house retains some of its original appointments. A long marble sink with drain space and the pressed tin cove ceiling remain.

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7. B

In comparison to the first floor, the second level is quite plain. Two marble sinks with their chrome fixtures survive in the bathrooms.

In all, the Blades House contains some thirty-eight rooms, and with very few exceptions, remains as it was built in the early years of the twentieth century. Much of the furniture designed especially for the house at the time of its construction is still in place.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The economic boom experienced by New Bern at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was equally as important and remunerative as the one that occurred at the turn of the previous century. The circa 1800 era of prosperity was the result of shipping, naval stores, and the importance of New Bern as a port. During the circa 1900 boom, lumber was the major product, and transportation was provided both by ship and railroads. In 1893, there were five steamship lines and two railroads operating out of New Bern. Lumber and forest-related products accounted for the majority of freight carried by these lines. In 1891

over 100,000,000 feet of lumber, going to various points in the North, in the states of Maryland, Delaware, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and the New England states was shipped. . . .

Twelve saw and planing mills were necessary to handle the volume of timber passing through the town daily.

Just as the earlier era provided the fortunes and taste to construct some of the best Federal houses in North Carolina, the second era brought equally good examples of other styles, including the Queen Anne. Many houses of this era in the state have perished, the victims of development and failing family fortunes which made their upkeep impossible. The W. B. Blades house remains, however, and is still used as a residence by the family for whom it was built. The family was one of the most active and prosperous in the local lumber business. Shortly after the beginning of the twentieth century W. B. Blades withdrew from the lumber mills and turned to other pursuits. These included the New Bern Banking and Trust Company, the Oakes Manufacturing Company, and the New Bern Brick Company, all of which he served as president.

When Blades decided, early in the twentieth century, to move from his East Front Street residence to a new house, he chose Herbert W. Simpson to design the new structure. Blades had both the wealth and the taste to indulge himself and his architect in the best of the Queen Anne style. The Blades companies (still owned by members of the family) provided the lumber,

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including pine, mahogany, oak, and birds-eye maple, as well as brick, tile, ornamental hardware; and lighting and plumbing fixtures. Blades, it is said, had for several years previously been saving the choicest pieces of wood as they became available in anticipation of building his new house. The house was completed in 1903, and concrete walks and granite curbing were laid around it by the owner one year later.

How or why Blades chose Simpson as his architect is not known, for at the time Simpson was not primarily known as an architect, but as an undertaker. The Blades House obviously brought him considerable fame as an architect. Shortly after the house was completed, he advertised in a trade publication of the Norfolk and Southern Railroad as an "Architect," using the Blades House in his advertisement, although he continued as undertaker as well. Other houses of his design exist in New Bern, though no full listing of his efforts has ever been made. The Blades House, however, is adequate evidence that his capability for design and execution was first rate.

Of three large Queen Anne mansions constructed in New Bern, the Blades House is the only survivor. It is a tour de force of the style, displaying craftsmanship, especially in wood, that has few equals. As an example of the unlimited opulence and inventiveness of its style as well as of the taste and capability of its builder and the craftsmen who constructed it, it has few peers.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Craven County Records, Craven County Courthouse, New Bern, North Carolina, Office of the Register of Deeds. (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).

Craven County Records, State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina. (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).

Grant, H. L. What New Bern N. C. Has to Offer You. Norfolk and Southern Railroad, 1905.

New Bern Journal, June 3, 1904.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	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	°	'	"	°	'	"	35°	06'	42"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	77°	02'	17"
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"			
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 2 Acre

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:

Survey and Planning Unit Staff, John B. Wells, III, Supervisor

ORGANIZATION

State Department of Archives and History

DATE

10 September 1971

STREET AND NUMBER:

109 East Jones Street

CITY OR TOWN:

Raleigh,

STATE

North Carolina

CODE

37

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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

[Handwritten Signature]

Title Director, State Department of Archives and History

Date 10 September 1971

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

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date

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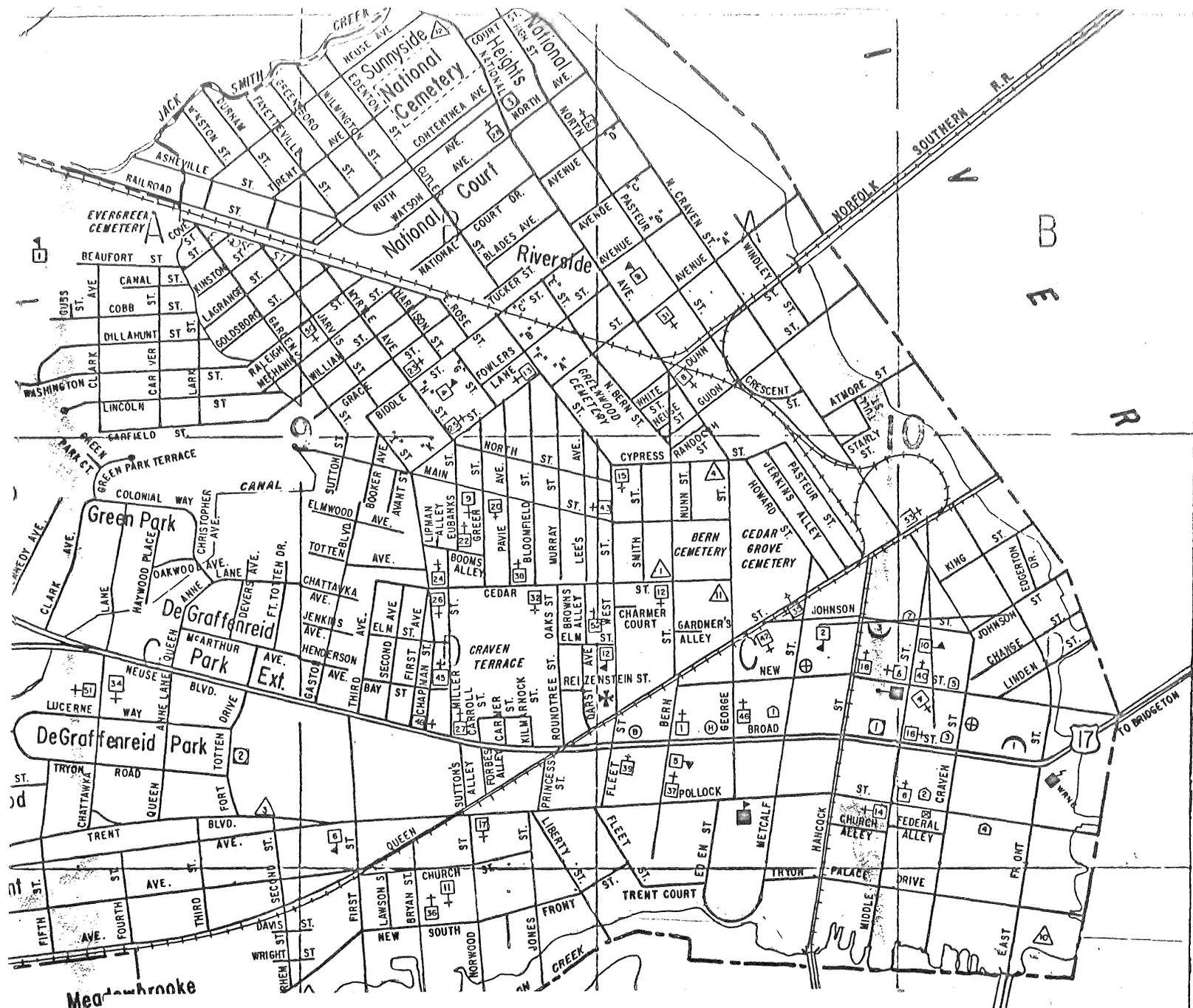
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9.

Wodehouse, Lawrence, "Architecture in North Carolina, 1700-1900," North Carolina Architect, January-February, 1970.

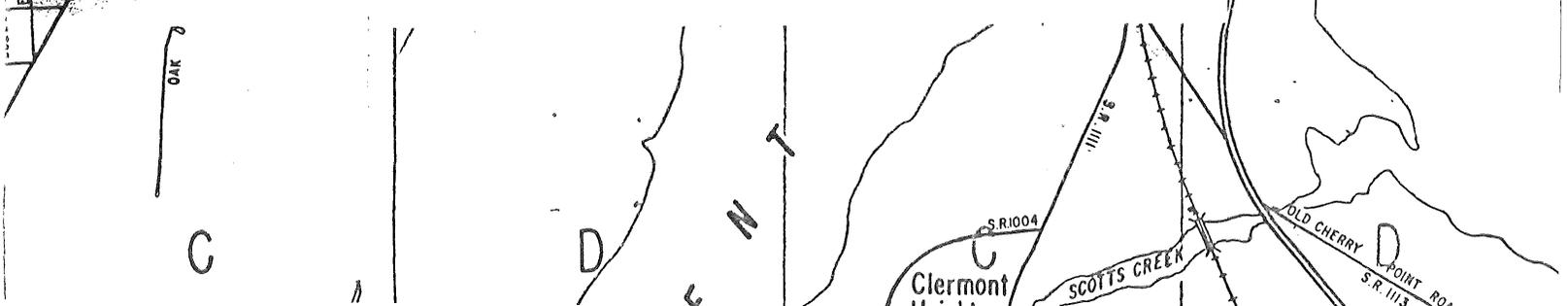
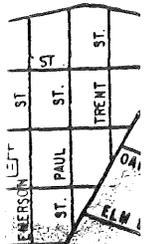


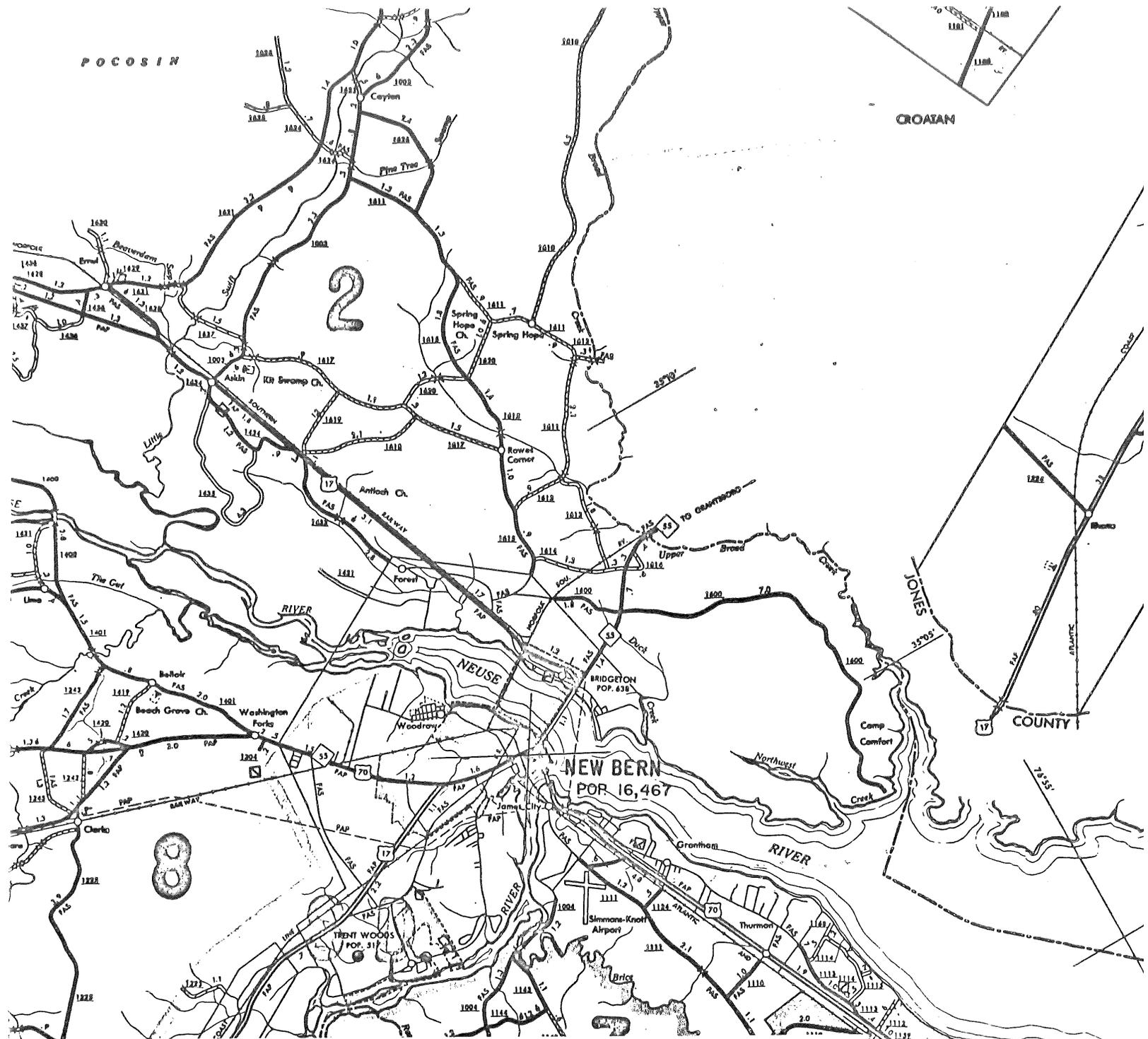
Blades House
 602 Middle Street
 New Bern, North Carolina

Map of New Bern and Vicinity, New Bern Chamber of Commerce
 drawn by Gilfredo Gonzalez
 Scale: 1"/1200 feet
 no date

Latitude
 degrees minutes seconds
 35° 06' 42"

Longitude
 degrees minutes seconds
 77° 02' 17"





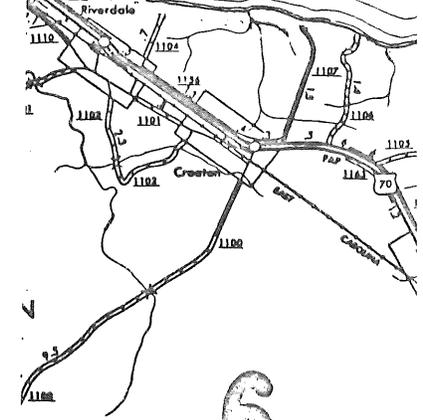
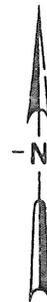
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 602 Middle Street
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Map of New Bern and Vicinity, New Bern Chamber of Commerce
 drawn by Gilfredo Gonzalez

Scale: 1"/1200 feet
 no date

Latitude
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 35° 06' 42"

Longitude
 degrees minutes seconds
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NATIONAL

