

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

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

1. NAME

COMMON:  
Coats House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
1503 St. Andrews Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Tarboro (Second Congressional District, The Hon. L. H. Fountain)

STATE North Carolina	CODE 37	COUNTY: Edgecombe	CODE 065
-------------------------	------------	----------------------	-------------

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. and Mrs. H. B. Keehln

STREET AND NUMBER:  
1503 St. Andrews Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Tarboro

STATE: North Carolina	CODE 37
--------------------------	------------

STATE: North Carolina  
COUNTY: Edgecombe

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
Edgecombe County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
Tarboro

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:

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

## 7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" 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 Coats House, set in a large wooded lot in the midst of a developing commercial area, is a picturesque example of the "English Cottage" style of architecture made popular in the mid-nineteenth century by the style books of Andrew Jackson Downing and others. The structure, built of brick laid in common bond, is two stories tall and roughly square in configuration. Particularly characteristic of the cottage style is the wide overhang of the hip roof, accented by the elongated block modillions Downing aptly called "rafter brackets." On all four sides, the roofline is interrupted by a centrally placed gable. The roof is pierced by four interior end chimneys and capped by a cupola. An ingenious feature of the house is the presence of small vents, each about the size of a brick, covered with an open grate, placed between the floors, said to provide ventilation to the structural members.

The main (west) facade is three bays wide, with a full-width one-story porch. Chamfered posts with simple scroll brackets support the hip roof, which has the same rafter-bracket treatment as the main roof. All first-level openings are floor-length and topped by heavy lintels having a molded upper edge that rises to a shallow point. The central entrance consists of a single door with four panels, of which the upper two are glazed. The door is surrounded by sidelights and a transom, and all elements are outlined by heavy moldings. The flanking bays are occupied by French doors with transoms. At the second level the windows are quite different: the central bay, under the false gable, contains a round-arched casement window set in a round arch of gauged brick. The window frame is molded, but the sill is plain, as are the blocks that occur below the sill. The flanking bays contain small, trabeated casement windows. The front windows are all fitted with louvered shutters.

The windows on the sides of the house are like those of the front, but their placement is somewhat different. Two first-story windows occur toward the center of the house, between the chimneys. The second-story flanking windows are placed toward the ends of the facade, outside the chimneys. The rear of the house appears to have been originally much like the front. A one-story frame addition was constructed (reportedly about the turn of the twentieth century), but the original doorway and some elements of a porch like the front one remain. The cupola, roughly square in section, is truncated, with two horizontal rectangular windows on each face. The overhang of the hip roof is emphasized by rafter brackets. The roof is topped by a bulbous scroll finial.

The first floor of the interior of the Coats House follows a center-hall plan, two rooms deep. The finish is rather plain, with walls plastered above wide molded baseboards. The most distinctive feature is the design of the door and window frames. The inner molding frames the rectangular opening, but the outer two moldings rise to a shallow point, echoing the design of the exterior lintels. This treatment occurs on interior doors and on the French doors that serve as windows. The latter have ingenious movable transoms that provide ventilation. The first-floor mantels are said to date from 1910, and they are typical examples of that era. Free-standing colonnettes flank the fire opening; similar, shorter colonnettes

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
North Carolina	
COUNTY	
Edgecombe	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

7.

occur above the shelf, supporting an upper shelf and flanking a mirror. Applied foliate patterns ornament the friezes and end blocks. The two parlors on the south side of the house are joined by a wide sliding double door. The center hall (which is divided from the rooms by brick walls) is interrupted by a partition wall with a door. To the rear of the door, the enclosed stair rises between the partition walls of the two north rooms.

The plan of the second floor is quite different from that of the first. It is arranged around two wide halls that cross at the center, with a leg extending to each of the arched windows beneath the gables. This configuration results in an open, dramatic light-filled space--in contrast to the conventional arrangement below. The arched windows have molded frames ornamented with gougework. The stair rises along the rear wall of the north leg of the hall and is protected by a balustrade with a heavy chamfered newel and a molded rail supported by slender turned balusters. To the rear of this stair, a steep, narrow enclosed secondary stair rises in one flight to the plainly finished cupola. Each of the four rooms on the second floor, located in the quadrants marked off by the halls, is lit by two small casement windows. All but one of these rooms contains a simple mantel of typical mid-nineteenth century design. The square fire opening is flanked by plain pilasters that support a frieze whose lower edge is ogee-arched. The original mantel in the southwest room has been replaced by a small metal one with ornamental foliate patterns.

To the rear of the Coats House there is a brick kitchen with two rooms at the first level and quarters above. It has a wide porch on the east side. A frame smokehouse is also present.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian;       16th Century       18th Century       20th Century  
 15th Century       17th Century       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 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

The construction of the Coats House in Tarboro can be related to the building there of Calvary Episcopal Church, designed by the locally noted architect, William Percival. Thomas H. Coats (also spelled "Coates") was the builder of both structures. The house is located on land bought by Coats on October 10, 1860. He bought the 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ -acre tract from R. R. Bridgers for \$1,200. The deed refers only to "land in fee simple with the right of way to one half of said street next to said tract" with no indication of a building on it. In this same year, according to a manuscript of Joseph B. Cheshire (then rector of Calvary Episcopal Church), "Mr. R. R. Bridgers was delegated to wait on Mr. Coats and close the bargain for building the church so far as the subscription would go--\$10,500, and report to a future meeting." Cheshire reported further that work on the church began in the spring of 1860 and that by the summer of 1861 the walls, spires, floor, and roof had been completed when war brought a halt to the work. \$9,275 of the \$10,500 subscription had by this time been spent. The church remained uncompleted until the fall of 1867.

The church in Tarboro was not the only case in which Coats had executed Percival's designs. In 1858 and 1859, he had worked from Percival's plans in constructing a much larger Gothic Revival church--First Baptist Church in Raleigh. Also underway from 1858 to 1861 was another major building project, the construction of buildings called "New East" and "New West" at the University of North Carolina. University President Kemp Battle later described Percival as the architect and Thomas H. Coats, "a New England man," as the builder. Battle recorded that in these buildings

for the first time in University history heating with other than fireplaces was adopted on the recommendation of Percival. Furnaces were placed in the basement of each building and the hot water system adopted. The plan proved a failure . . . not because the principle was faulty, but because there was a defect in the work.

In 1860, a letter to William A. Graham regarding another University building project reported,

Enclosed I send you a plan of a Belfry drawn by Mr. Coats, which he says can be carried out on the top of the South Building. He has examined the 4th story, etc., etc., and gives it as his opinion that the Bell can be placed there without endangering the walls.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
North Carolina	
COUNTY	
Edgecombe	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

8. A

Given the scope of Coats's activities at this period, it is quite possible that he built the brick house in Tarboro during and perhaps after the construction of the church there. Coats's whereabouts and activities during the war years are not known; in the fall of 1864 a Thomas Coats enlisted in the Thirty-first Regiment (a predominately Wake County unit) and deserted after two months, but there is no reason to believe that this was the same Thomas Coats. Family tradition has it that Coats rented the house to Willie Walston during the war, but no evidence has been found to prove this. It is probable, however, that the house was finished by the early 1860s, judging from the following advertisement, apparently referring to the Coats House, which appeared in the December 12, 1865, Tarboro Southerner under the heading, Real Estate for Sale:

The house is a new brick "English Cottage", has four rooms below and four above, each bedroom has a wardrobe and china closets connect with the dining room.

The house is splendidly ventilated from the top and sides and is perfectly dry in the dampest weather, has a fine verandah in front and rear and balconies on each side.

The outhouses are splendidly arranged for neatness, taste and convenience. They consist of a large two-story brick kitchen, containing four rooms, two smoke houses (one of which may be used for any other purpose), a large brick pantry, nicely arranged for coolness in summer. It is sunk about two feet below the ground and is filled between the ceiling and shingles with sawdust and charcoal, thereby kept perfectly cool in the extreme heat of weather.

A well of water nicely covered and curbed with brick is about 37 or 38 feet deep, and is said to be the finest in the county, is very soft and light, and at no time during the drought of the past summer had less than ten feet of water.

There are on the premises, a nice carriage house, two sets of stables and a cow house, all of which are under one cover, a yankee pig sty, hen houses, chicken coops, and many other conveniences.

The front yard is nicely laid out, has a beautiful carriage drive up to the door, and has many choice flowers and plants.

The garden is a very fine and large one. It has an asparagus bed unsurpassed in the state. The premises contain about five acres and the grounds are well-stocked with fruit trees of the choicest kinds.

A fine oak grove surrounds the house, making it a most delightful and airy place in summer.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
North Carolina	
COUNTY	
Edgecombe	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

8. B

It is situated near the depot in a very healthy and wealthy neighborhood. The house was planned and built by a competent architect. Possession given immediately.

J. B. Carmer  
Tarboro, N.C.

December 12, 1865

(Carmer seems to have been an agent; no deeds from him at this time are recorded in Edgecombe County.)

It is possible that the reference to the "competent architect" is to William Percival, but it seems likely that if that were the case, his name would have been featured. More probably Coats himself, as a builder (qualified to make the drawings for the belfry at South Building) was the "architect" mentioned; he later advertised himself as a builder and architect. It is quite possible, too, that he had access to style books in Percival's possession, which could be the source of the fashionable "English Cottage" style design he used for his house. Although the house is described as "new" in the advertisement, several details indicate that it had been inhabited for at least a short time: the reference to the well's faithfulness during the previous summer's drought, the presence of "choice flowers and plants," and especially the "asparagus bed unsurpassed in the state," which, given the nature of asparagus, must have taken some years to develop.

The sale of the house, however, did not take place until April 27, 1867, when Coats sold the property to Willie Walston; it was described in the deed as the lot "on which there is a brick dwelling house." The deed gave \$8,000 as the price of the house and lot and described Coats as being "of the city of Raleigh." Among Coats's buildings in Raleigh was Tucker Hall, an elaborate commercial structure designed by a New York architect. It featured a glass and cast-iron front and included rooms for Tucker's business as well as a gas-lit auditorium seating 1,200 people. Coats continued to work in Raleigh and as late as 1879 was listed there as an architect and builder. The house he owned in Tarboro has remained in the hands of Walston descendents and is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. H. B. Keehln.

The Coats House is one of the few examples in the state of the picturesque "English Cottage" style executed in brick; the ingenious ventilation system and the unusual plan of the second floor are of particular interest. It is historically significant because of its connection with Thomas Coats, the builder of a number of North Carolina's most important mid-nineteenth century buildings.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Battle, Kemp. History of the University of North Carolina, Vol. I. Raleigh: privately printed, 1907.  
 Edgecombe County Records, Edgecombe County Courthouse, Tarboro, North Carolina, Office of the Register of Deeds (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).  
 Edgecombe County Records, State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).  
 Cheshire, Joseph Blount. "The Early Church in Edgecombe County," manuscript in the Joseph Blount Cheshire Collection, State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina, no date.  
 Tarboro Southerner, December 12, 1865.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA  $3\frac{1}{2}$  acres

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	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		35° 54' 25"	77° 32' 19"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
 Survey and Planning Unit Staff

ORGANIZATION: State Department of Archives and History      DATE: 19 July 1972

STREET AND NUMBER:  
 109 East Jones Street

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

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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, State Department of Archives and History

Date 19 July 1972

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

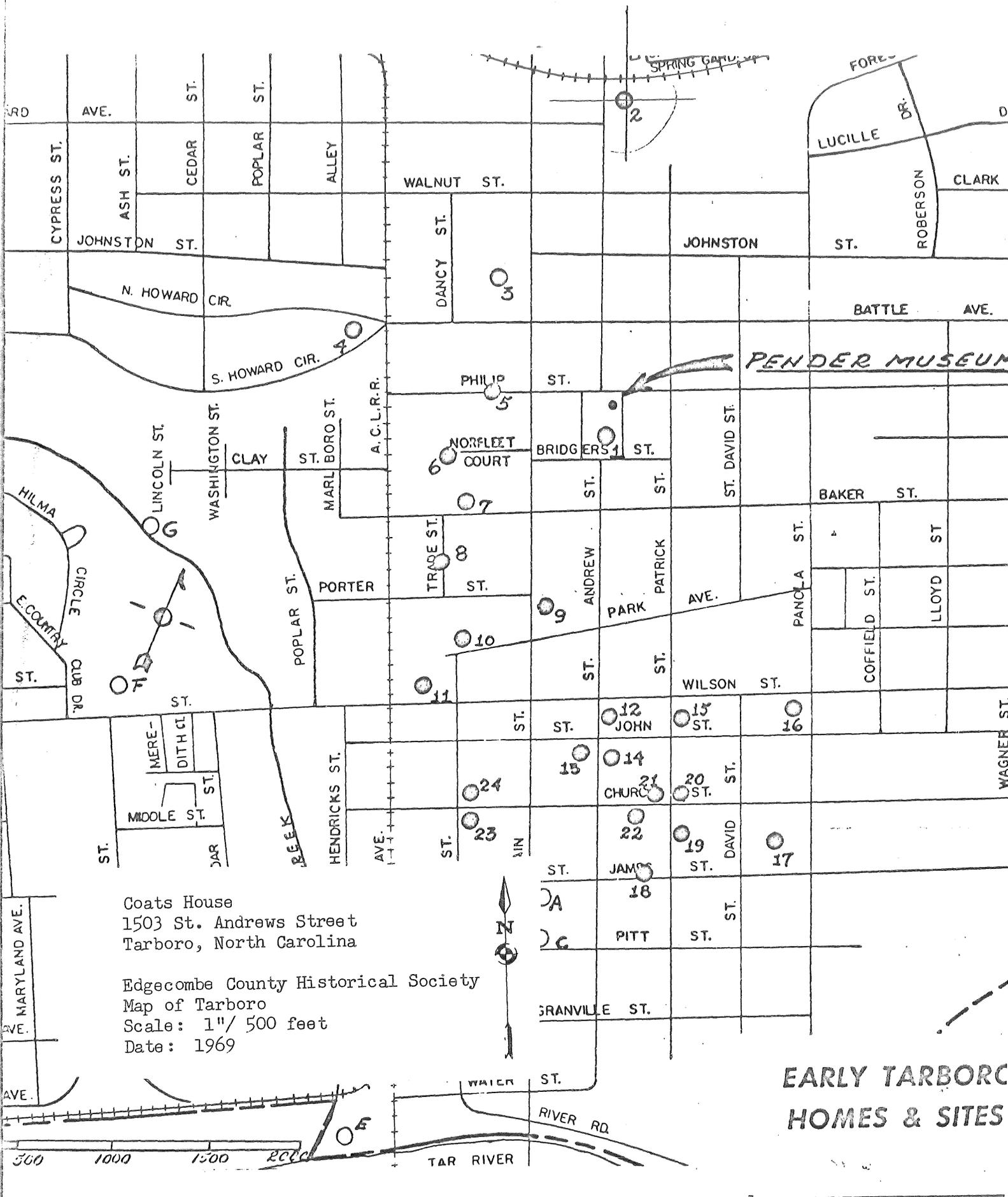
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_



Coats House  
 1503 St. Andrews Street  
 Tarboro, North Carolina

Edgecombe County Historical Society  
 Map of Tarboro  
 Scale: 1" / 500 feet  
 Date: 1969

# EARLY TARBORO HOMES & SITES

