

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

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

1. NAME

COMMON:  
Trenton Historic District

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
See continuation sheet #2 for boundaries

CITY OR TOWN:  
Trenton

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
First

STATE: North Carolina

CODE: 37

COUNTY: Jones

CODE: 103

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
various

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE: North Carolina

CODE:

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

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

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Market Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Trenton

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:

STATE: North Carolina

COUNTY: Jones

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*Revised 6/28/74* (Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

2. Boundaries

Beginning at the rear property line on the north side of Trent Street at the intersection with the eastern rear property lines of Lower Street; thence south along said line (which becomes the eastern boundary of the cemetery) to the southern boundary of the cemetery; thence west along said line to the intersection of Lake View and Weber streets; thence south along Weber Street to the southern rear property lines of Lake View Street; thence west along said line to the eastern rear property lines of Market Street; thence south along said line to a point 100 yards south of the southern high water line of Brock Mill Pond; thence west 100 yards south of the southern boundary of Brock Mill Pond to a point 100 yards west of the western tip of the pond; thence east along an imaginary line 100 yards north of and parallel to the northern high water line of Brock Mill Pond to a point corresponding to Pollock Street; thence north to and along Pollock Street to the northern rear property lines of Jones Street; thence east along said line to the western rear property lines of King Street; thence north along said line to its intersection with the northern rear property lines of Trent Street; thence east along said line to the beginning.

7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Trenton Historic District consists of a grid of streets flanking N.C. 58, which serves as the main street, and includes Brock Mill Pond to the southwest. The small-scale buildings, nearly all frame, are dwarfed by massive trees heavily draped with Spanish moss, which give Trenton much of its character. Within the district are found representative examples of nearly two centuries of domestic, ecclesiastical, and commercial architecture in the vernacular mode. Despite the stylistic range, one basic configuration recurs in the domestic buildings; most houses are simple two-story frame dwellings with gable roofs, three or four bays wide and two deep, most having a central facade gable and some form of central entrance porch. (In many cases the central gable is a late addition to an earlier house.) Although mid to late nineteenth century buildings dominate the townscape, survivors from the earlier years of Trenton exist as well, sometimes disguised by overbuilding.

Probably the oldest house remaining in Trenton is the small dwelling at the core of the Grace Episcopal Church Parish House (northwest corner Weber and Lakeview streets). Its appearance and orientation have been changed by additions, but some original fabric remains, including beaded weatherboards; on the interior, the hall-and-parlor plan survives along with much of the simple Georgian trim. This includes beaded beams and molded chair rails and baseboards; board-and-batten doors hung on HL hinges (some retaining rose-head nails with leather washers); Georgian mantels with molded architraves, flush friezes, and heavy molded shelves; and probably the open-string stair.

From a slightly later period there is the Jacob Huggins House (west side of Weber Street between Trent and Jones streets) which is modest but handsomely executed in traditional Federal style; it is said to have been built between 1810 and 1825. Its exterior appearance is somewhat altered by the front central gable and Victorian shed porch, but it retains very handsome Flemish bond chimneys with single smooth shoulders, a simple transomed entrance, molded window frames (containing nine-over-six and six-over-six sash), and some molded weatherboards. The interior, which follows a hall-and-parlor plan with an enclosed stair, is impressively finished and well preserved. The hall has a flat-paneled wainscot composed of two ranges of panels and a two-part Federal mantel with paneled pilasters and a dentil cornice shelf; the parlor has a flush wainscot and a rather elaborate three-part mantel with pierced and gouged ornament and undercut dentils. The second-floor mantels follow simple Georgian lines. Six-panel doors in molded frames recur throughout the house.

The Smith House (northeast corner Jones and Weber streets), said to have been built about 1820, is an ambitious two-story, side-hall-plan Federal-style house with some Greek Revival elements. Its plan and fine Federal finish exemplify the New Bern influence in the area, particularly the doors, each of which has six panels, the upper four flat and the lower two flush--a typical New Bern characteristic. The graceful open-string Federal stair has a ramped, rounded handrail terminating in a scrolled newel on a curtail step. The two first-floor mantels are academic Adamesque three-part ones, each with symmetrically molded pilasters and well-executed sunbursts on the end blocks and center tablet, beneath a dentil cornice and

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molded shelf. The second-story mantels are similar but simpler. Greek Revival elements are seen in the use of symmetrically molded architraves with corner blocks, which occur around some interior windows and doors, on the front door, which has a wide transom and sidelights, and on the facade windows. A colossal porch replaced a two-tier porch, and a two-story wing with a projecting front bay is a later addition.

Probably also dating from the early nineteenth century, but much simpler, are the Kinsey House (southeast corner of King and Jones streets), a rambling two-story house covered with beaded weatherboards, probably built in several sections; and the Franks House (across the street) which retains some early features including Flemish bond chimneys despite extensive early twentieth century remodeling.

Also quite simple, but with Greek Revival characteristics, is the Henderson House (southeast corner of Trent and Weber streets), a one-story house with a central breezeway joining two hip-roof sections; the hip-roof entrance porch has square posts and corresponding pilasters.

The most distinctive example of the Italianate mode is the McDaniel-Dixon House (northwest corner of Market and Lakeview streets), a two-story frame dwelling with a low hip roof with a wide overhang above a frieze punctuated by paired brackets; this cornice is repeated on the one-story full-width porch. The interior is consistent, with wide architraves and mantels with various paneling schemes.

Post-Civil War buildings in Trenton include Gothic Revival, Italianate, and a blend of Queen Anne and Eastlake styles. Three Gothic Revival churches show the potential for variety the style offered. Of particular importance is Grace Episcopal Church (NR) (northwest corner of Lakeview and Weber streets), a delightful Carpenter Gothic board-and-batten building whose character derives from the skillful use of triangular forms and a wealth of scalloped ornament. Also quite interesting is United Methodist Church (Market Street north of Jones Street), a frame gable-roof structure with simple pointed-arched openings, distinguished by an eccentric tower. It rises in two stages, both square in section, and is topped by a polygonal shingled spire; breaking out from all four corners of the base of the spire are curious polygonal cylindrical bartizans, with conical lower termini and conical, polygonal shingled caps, each with a finial like that on the main spire. Less distinctive is the Trenton Pentecostal Holiness Church (west side of Market Street, south of Jones Street), a gable roof building with acutely-pointed triangular-arched openings with heavy hoodmolds. These recur, filled with louvers, on the three-stage corner tower, which is capped by a slim spire and weathervane.

Possibly the earliest standing brick building in Trenton is the old jail, (south side of Jones Street near Market Street), a small one-story structure of brick laid in common bond. It is distinguished by the frieze and corbel cornice that carries around the building, defining at each end a pedimented

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raised gable. The large segmental-arched windows, filled with bars, have heavy stone stilted segmental arches and stone sills. The iron door has four flat panels and is surmounted by a barred transom.

Similar in the use of brick and of segmental-arched openings is the 1908 Bank of Jones County (southwest corner of Jones at Cherry streets), a two-story commercial building. Corbel cornices and panels are employed as well as stuccoed arches over openings. Segmental-arched openings and corbel ornament are repeated as well in the row of brick commercial buildings across Jones Street from the bank building, also probably dating from the early twentieth century.

The domestic buildings of this era are for the most part simple one or two-story dwellings with sawn or turned ornament (particularly on porches), projecting bays, and the ubiquitous central gable. The Brock House (southwest corner of Market and Lakeview streets) is a simple one-story L-shaped house, but it is ornamented by a fanciful scalloped cornice that suggests a connection with Grace Episcopal Church. Another house (on Jones Street between Weber and Market streets), has an extraordinary roof configuration, with a very steep pyramidal roof, peaking at an interior chimney and interrupted by multiple cross gables; there is a two-tier central entrance porch. Also interesting is the Dr. Monk House (on the south side of Jones Street), which is a large two-story house with a two-story pedimented, demi-hexagonal projecting central entrance bay. Across the facade and around the sides carries a wide, one-story porch with turned, bracketed posts and a series of small gabled interruptions of the roof.

As important to Trenton as its architecture is the old mill pond within its boundaries. The pond is a large body of quiet, dark, reflecting water supplied by underground streams and surrounding land drainage. It is essentially unencroached upon, and provides a strikingly beautiful natural resource surrounded by aged cypress trees hung with long trails of Spanish moss. A frame mill building sits adjacent to the pond at the point where the water spills over the dam into the creek. This mill was built in the 1940s on the same site as earlier structures.

**SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 townscape of Trenton is in keeping with its history as the small county seat and market town of a farming county, since its founding in 1784. The architectural fabric of the village consists--with the exception of two Carpenter Gothic churches of considerable distinction--of modest vernacular frame dwellings of various periods ranging in a traditional grid from a central brick commercial row. The consistency of small scale and simple details throughout nearly two centuries' building, the towering trees hung with Spanish moss, and, perhaps most important, the unique loveliness of the mill pond at the town's boundary. All these combine to make Trenton a little country town of serene and unpretentious charm.

Trenton is the county seat of Jones County, which was formed in 1779 and named in honor of Willie Jones of Halifax, an important Revolutionary leader in North Carolina, a president of the Council of Safety, and the arch Anti-federalist in the state. The county was formed from Craven County; the area had always focused upon the Craven County seat, New Bern, and much of the land in the new county was owned by New Bern men. Jones County has continued to the present to be oriented toward New Bern--politically, socially, and economically--and this orientation is embodied in the architecture of the county, particularly during the Federal era, when the side-hall-plan two-story town houses with fine Adamesque trim prevailed in New Bern and were reproduced in the Jones County countryside.

The Jones County area had been settled early in the eighteenth century: as early as 1709 the Lawson map showed "Mr. Jones 4000 acres," and the 1733 Mosely map showed "Mr. Frederick Jones 7375 acres." This map also showed a ferry on the Trent river, run by Franks. After the county was established in 1779, the first county court was directed to be held at the home of Thomas Webber, whose large plantation was located at Trent Bridge. The court continued to meet at Webber's until the courthouse was built. On June 2, 1784, an act was passed authorizing a town by the name of Trenton to be laid out where the courthouse stood (the home of Thomas Webber). Abner Nash (later governor of the state), Frederick Hargett, Lewis Bryan, John Bryan, William Randall, John Isler, and Edward Whitty, esquires, were appointed commissioners to buy land for the town of Trenton, which probably took its name from its location near the headwaters of the Trent River. The land was divided into half-acre lots and laid out as a town and common. The lots were sold with the usual requirements.

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The streets were laid out near a large cypress pond which still figures prominently in the townscape. There had been a mill on this pond for many years before the establishment of the town. Title to the mill and pond can be traced back to Anthony Hatch, who obtained it in 1776. This may be the same mill pond as that owned in 1774--and perhaps much earlier--by Anthony's brother Lemuel, a Revolutionary period leader and member of the Assembly and Provincial Congress, who obtained land in the neighborhood as early as 1758. Older than the town itself, the cypress mill pond with its mill (a later structure) is an area of remarkable beauty, its picturesque serenity giving Trenton, as a recent newspaper column said, "that special thing a place needs to make it good to be there." (The mill pond has been owned since 1969 by a non-profit corporation that intends to preserve it.)

One of the most memorable occasions in the history of Trenton was the visit in 1791 of President George Washington on his Southern Tour. In his diary he recorded that

under an escort of horse, and many of the principal Gentlemen of Newbern, I recommenced my journey; dined at a place called Trenton, which is the head of boat navigation of the River Trent, which is crossed at this place on a bridge and lodged at one Shine's, 10 m. farther both indifferent Houses.

Neither the War of 1812 nor the Civil War saw significant action in Trenton, although in both Trenton and Jones County citizens joined the ranks. In 1862 New Bern was captured by Union forces and occupied; in 1863, 1864, and 1865, skirmishes took place in and near Trenton, and citizens of the town took part in the Battle of Wyse Fork (March, 1865), fought in defense of the town of Kinston. Federal troops advancing from New Bern met Confederate resistance, and about 50,000 troops were involved.

Besides its primary function as county seat, Trenton has depended economically upon its role as a market town for a farming county. Its location "at the head of boat navigation of the River Trent," and the proximity to a ferry and bridge naturally attracted trade. In addition, the eighteenth century maps and the 1808 Price-Strother map show Trenton at the juncture of major east-west and north-south roads, including a road from Wilmington to New Bern. By 1833, as shown on the MacRae-Brazier map, the north-south route apparently bypassed Trenton, which remained on the east-west road from New Bern to Kenansville and points west. By 1861, as shown on the Colton map, railroads had been completed from Beaufort via New Bern and Kinston to Raleigh and from Wilmington via Goldsboro to Weldon and north--bypassing Trenton altogether. This, together with the lessening importance of river traffic, directed commercial growth away from Trenton. It has continued to function steadily as a local market town. Before the Civil War, the plantations produced wheat, oats, rice, rye, corn, peas, and cotton as well as raising cattle, sheep, and hogs. More lately, truck crops and tobacco have been the pre-dominant farm products; lumbering has been the chief non-agricultural industry

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8. B

until recent years, when some manufacturing has come into the county.

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Research by John Baxton Flowers, III, survey specialist; architectural description by Catherine W. Cockshutt, survey supervisor, and Neil Pearson, consultant.  
 Corbett, David Leroy. Formation of North Carolina Counties 1663-1943. Raleigh, North Carolina: Division of Archives and History, 1950.  
 Jones County Historical Society, Scrapbook.  
 Jones County Records, Jones County Courthouse, Trenton, North Carolina, (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).  
 Jones County Records, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).

**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	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	35° 04' 08"	77° 21' 37"		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	35° 04' 08"	77° 20' 49"				
SE	35° 03' 33"	77° 20' 49"				
SW	35° 03' 33"	77° 21' 37"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **300 acres**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Survey and Planning Unit**

ORGANIZATION: **Division of Archives and History**      DATE: **31 May 1974**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**109 East Jones Street**

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

**12 STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION      NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National       State       Local

Name Thornton W. Mitchell  
**Thornton W. Mitchell**

Title Acting Director, Division of Archives and History

Date 31 May 1974

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

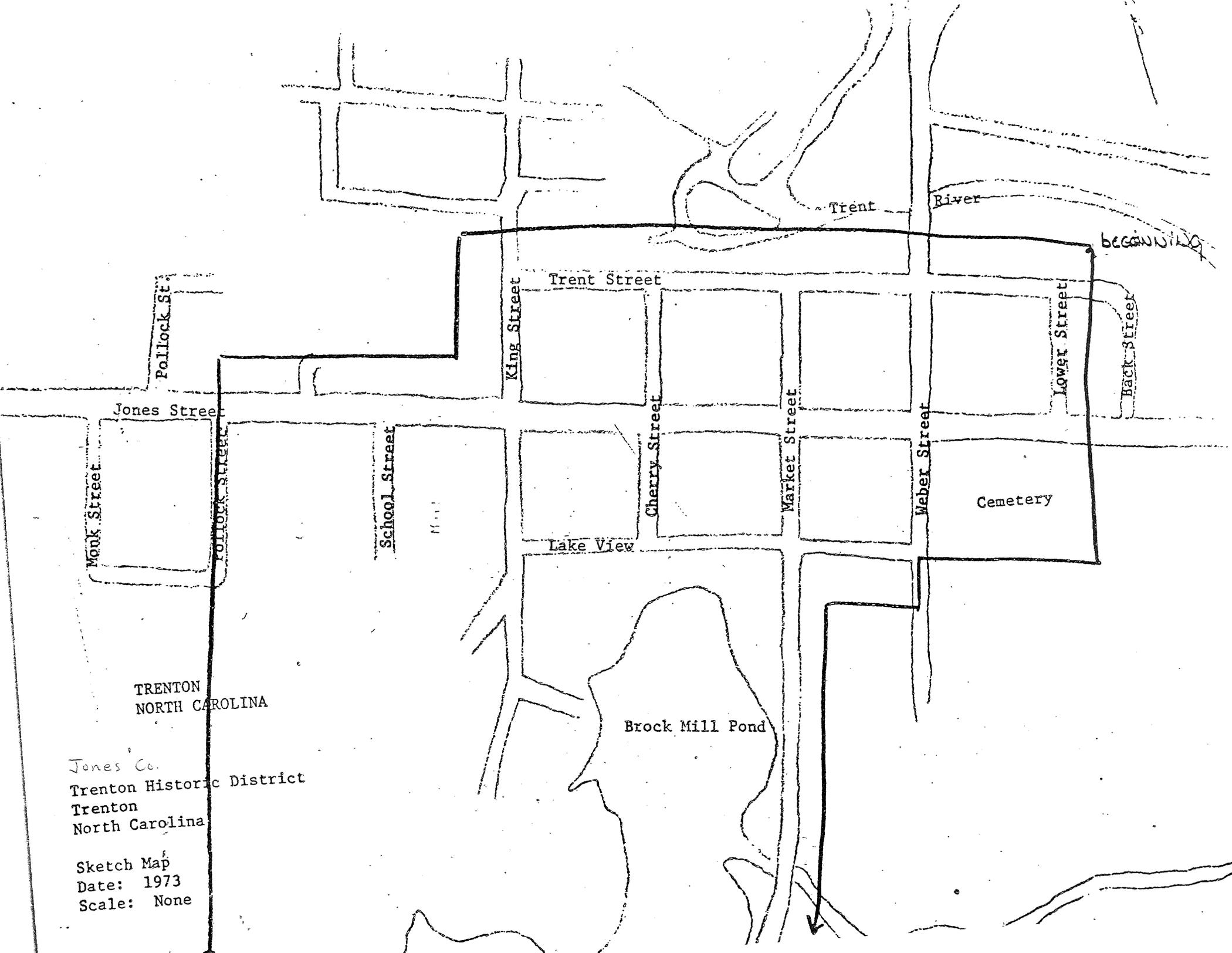
Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



Trent

River

beginning

Trent Street

King Street

Lower Street

Back Street

Pollock St

Jones Street

Moak Street

Pollock Street

School Street

Cherry Street

Market Street

Weber Street

Cemetery

Lake View

TRENTON  
NORTH CAROLINA

Brock Mill Pond

Jones Co.  
Trenton Historic District  
Trenton  
North Carolina

Sketch Map  
Date: 1973  
Scale: None

