

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Darden Hotel **(Canocho House)*
AND/OR COMMON
Same **Hamilton House*

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
Main Street
CITY, TOWN
Hamilton
STATE
North Carolina

--- VICINITY OF
1st
COUNTY
Martin

--- NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
CODE
117

3 CLASSIFICATION

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

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Historic Darden Hotel Foundation, Inc., c/o Mr. Sam Johnson, President
STREET & NUMBER
New Owners - Mr + Mrs William P. Riley, Jr.
Darden Hotel
Hamilton, N.C. 27840
CITY, TOWN
Hamilton
VICINITY OF
North Carolina
STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
MARTIN COUNTY COURTHOUSE
STREET & NUMBER
CITY, TOWN
Williamston
STATE
North Carolina

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
DATE
--- FEDERAL --- STATE --- COUNTY --- LOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
CITY, TOWN
STATE

** 11-28-77 - request of owner*

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 Darden Hotel, facing the main street of the small town of Hamilton, is a two-story frame temple-form building distinguished by its vernacular Ionic double portico. The building, three bays wide and four deep, is covered with weatherboards and rests on a brick foundation over a full basement. The eaves are boxed beneath a molded cornice. The gable roof is pierced by a heavy central chimney with a molded cap.

The main (west) facade features a superimposed portico. Appearing at both levels are pillars set on pedestals, both being square in section. The faces of each pillar are symmetrically molded. The pedestals are deeply paneled. The exaggerated Ionic capitals are quite massive and extend well beyond the sides of the pillars. The volutes are deeply incised into the front and rear faces of the capital; otherwise the capitals are unadorned. A thin abacus occurs beneath the plain, wide frieze. (It is interesting to note that essentially identical pillars exist on the porch of the Sherrod House, just south of Hamilton.) Between the posts runs a latticework balustrade. The wall under the porch is covered with flush siding, as is the tympanum of the pediment, which is pierced by a small lunette, now empty.

The first level of the main facade has windows in the two north bays and a single door in the south one. The upper half of the door has a single large pane of glass; the lower half has panels outlined by moldings. Above the door is a fanlight with delicate wooden members, set in a rectangular transom, with foliated scrollwork in the spandrels. The windows in the north bays contain six-over-six sash of unusual configuration. The muntins are spaced so that the panes are not of equal size: the central pane is a large square, the corner ones smaller squares, and the remaining panes elongated rectangles--vertical ones on the sides, horizontal on top and bottom. At the second level of this facade a single central door is flanked by windows containing conventional six-over-six sash.

The north side of the house has windows with normal six-over-six sash in all four bays at both levels. Direct access to the full basement is from a covered entrance on this side. The south side of the building has the same fenestration as the north, but a latticework addition with a gable roof and an open lancet-arched entrance covers the two central bays at the first level. It shelters a side entrance approached by steps that have a chamfered post supporting a molded handrail; no balusters are present.

The rear facade is pedimented, with a plain, flush-sided tympanum. The side bays at both levels have windows with six-over-six sash; at the center of the first level are two single doors immediately next to each other. At the second level, above the south door, there is a door, but the space beside it is blank. Only the outline visible on the wall suggests the porch that formerly served the doors at both the first and second levels.

The first floor of the interior follows a modified side-hall plan, two rooms deep. The side hall (containing the front stair which rises rear-to-front along the south wall) is interrupted by a partition across the middle of the house; to the rear of the partition the hall becomes a wider room. A partly enclosed service stair rises along

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the rear wall of this room. The front and rear rooms on the north side both have heavy, plain Greek Revival mantels with flat pilasters supporting a wide frieze. The wide baseboards are bounded by moldings that create the effect of one long panel on each wall. Beneath each window is a horizontal panel of similar design. At this level, the central chimney is evident on three sides: one side serves the normally-placed mantel on the east wall of the west room; another side serves the corner fireplace in the southwest angle of the east room; and the third side, with no opening, fills the northwest corner of the rear hall (southeast) room.

The plan of the second floor is quite different from the first, with maximum use of the center chimney apparently having been the organizing factor. Here the chimney has four sides, set diagonally, and there are four rooms, each with a plain Greek Revival mantel on the corner fireplace. Extending across the front of the house is a narrow hall approached by the main stair on the south. This front hall provides access to the front porch, and terminates to the north in a small, unheated room. Rising along the front wall of the hall is an astonishingly narrow attic stair, completely open, without a balustrade or spandrel enclosure. The attic is lit only by the lunette of the pediment.

The basement has brick walls and a dirt floor, as well as some wooden and brick partition walls. The walls bear traces of plaster. The central chimney has openings on both sides, and on the east side there is still some plaster, including part of an ornamental molded round arch over the fire opening. It is said that the basement was used as a kitchen and sometimes as a dining room.

SIGNIFICANCE

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 checked="" 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

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Darden Hotel, probably built in the 1840s or 1850s as a commercial building, is a prominent landmark of the small river town of Hamilton. The temple-form building with its highly vernacular Ionic two-tier portico exemplifies the vigor and individuality of a local craftsman's interpretation of the Greek Revival style.

The Darden Hotel is located in Hamilton, a small town situated near the Roanoke River in northwestern Martin County. The town was known as "Milton" until 1804, when it was incorporated under its present name, probably in honor of Alexander Hamilton, who lost his life that year in a duel with Aaron Burr. Its central location in the agriculturally rich Roanoke River valley, as well as its close proximity to the river itself, made the town an early center of commerce.

The earliest identifiable transfer of the land upon which the Darden Hotel was later erected occurred in 1823, when the executors of the estate of John Taylor conveyed the property to William Wilson of New York, who purchased "Lots 50, 51, 52, and 53" for \$1,000. Taylor was a prosperous planter whose will enumerated seventy-four slaves. Before the date of this conveyance, the land comprising these lots apparently was part of a larger tract and thus virtually impossible to identify.

Two years later William Wilson sold the four half-acre lots to Horace Colloman and William Churchill, Boston merchants, for \$1,500. According to the deed, the lots then included a "Dwelling house, store Ware House Kitchen and Smoke House," as well as a small warehouse "situated at the Public Landing." In 1836 Colloman and Churchill conveyed the lots to John Cloman, another prosperous Martin County planter, for \$700. Nothing in the wording of the deed accounts for the lower selling price. In 1842 "Waldo & Sprouill" (probably a business firm) purchased the property from Cloman. Only a receipt records this transaction, and Cloman's house and lot in Hamilton and warehouse "on Hamilton Landing" are mentioned. While no amount of money is specified, the reference to the wharf warehouse suggests continued use of the property in connection with the river trade.

The following year, S. R. Sprouill made out his half-interest in the tract to Joseph Waldo for \$625. Waldo, a native of Connecticut, is listed as a "Tradesman" in the census of 1850 and as a "Speculator" in the 1860 census. He was an active Hamilton merchant and was engaged in the jewelry business in partnership with J. N. Bell and in a mercantile enterprise in partnership with L. L. Clements for at least a time during 1856-1857. He was also engaged as an "authorized agent" for Benton and Brother, commission merchants of New York, during this time.

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In 1855 Waldo sold the property, then comprising only 1 7/10 acres, to J. H. Sebrell for \$6,000. (This deed included the first and only available plat map of the tract.) The marked increase in price, as well as the architectural style of the building, suggests that the structure was built during the period of Joseph Waldo's ownership between 1843 and 1855. J. H. Sebrell remained owner of the building from 1855 to 1867.

Local tradition has it that the building which later housed the Darden Hotel was in use as a hotel during the Civil War, and that its basement served for a time as a hospital. Although several minor skirmishes were fought in or near Hamilton, and the town was occupied by Federal troops on two separate occasions in 1862, no evidence could be found which positively identified the structure or revealed its use during the Civil War era.

In December, 1867, absentee owner J. H. Sebrell conveyed the future Boyle-Darden property to Virginus C. Sebrell for \$3,000. In February, 1870, the latter Sebrell, "now of Northampton County Virginia," sold the 1 7/10-acre tract to Mrs. Angenetta A. Boyle for \$3,100, who two years later conveyed it to Mrs. Mary A. Boyle, a native of England, who paid \$3,000 for the property.

The forerunner of the Darden Hotel opened its doors sometime between 1872 and 1878, as the North Carolina Business Directory for 1877-1878 includes the name of "Mrs. M. A. Boyle" as proprietor of a hotel in Hamilton. This is the first recorded reference to a hotel on the property. The hotel was apparently a successful venture, and it remained the only such facility in the town for at least six years. A brief sketch of Hamilton appearing in the Raleigh Register in 1884 mentions "a most excellent hotel kept by Mrs. Boyle, one of the best women on earth." No other issue of the North Carolina Business Directory is available before 1890, and that issue reflects the change in proprietorship from Mrs. Boyle to her daughter Mary Ann Darden.

Mrs. Boyle died intestate May 11, 1887. Legal title to the hotel property apparently passed under the laws of inheritance to her son Francis A. Boyle of Washington County. After a series of transfers among members of the family, Mary A. Darden obtained full title to the property by 1892.

At least as early as July, 1888, however, the hotel formerly operated by Mrs. Boyle had become popularly known as the "Conoho House," and was being actively managed by Mary Darden. Apparently Mrs. Darden began her proprietorship with at least some prior experience: the Martin County Census for 1870 gives her occupation as "Boarder;" no other evidence could be found, however, to indicate that she had in fact operated a boarding house at this early date. The North Carolina Business Directory for 1890 contains a reference to the "Conoho House," as well as to boarding facilities operated in Hamilton by S. L. Hyman and Mrs. Jane Jarvis, respectively. By 1896 the listings in the Business Directory included only the "Conoho House" and the boarding house operated by Mrs. Jarvis.

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Mary A. Darden died December 10, 1900, at the age of fifty-six. Her husband Thomas E. Darden apparently then became the manager of the hotel and continued to operate it until his death on November 5, 1911. The annual North Carolina Year Books for 1902 through 1907 include, under the heading "HOTELS AND BOARDING HOUSES," the listings "T. E. Darden" and "Mrs. J. B. Cloman." The Year Book for 1910 contains the first specific reference to the "Darden Hotel," as well as to Mrs. Cloman's establishment. These listings remained unchanged in each annual edition of this publication until 1916, when Hamilton's hotel and boarding facilities were listed as the "Pippen Hotel" and "coleman /sic/, Mrs. J. B.," respectively.

The 1916 listing reflects, albeit in tardy fashion, the change in ownership which had occurred in 1913 conveyed the property to R. A. Edmondson and his wife Sarah E. Edmondson, of Martin County, for \$1,500.

R. A. and Sarah E. Edmondson, ~~the new owners of the property,~~ conveyed the tract to J. W. Davenport of Martin County in December, 1913, after having owned it for only one month. The selling price was \$1,500. After 1913 the Darden Hotel site exchanged hands six times before being acquired by the Historic Darden Hotel Foundation, Inc., in February, 1971. *JK*

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre L&L: $35^{\circ} 56' 40''$ $77^{\circ} 12' 32''$
 UTM REFERENCES

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Research by Robert Topkins and Charles Blume, survey specialists; architectural description by Catherine W. Cockshutt, survey supervisor

ORGANIZATION Division of Archives and History DATE 29 September 1975

STREET & NUMBER 109 East Jones Street TELEPHONE 919/829-7862

CITY OR TOWN Raleigh STATE North Carolina

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE *Bruce McDaniel*

TITLE Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer DATE 29 September 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	DATE
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION.	DATE
ATTEST:	DATE
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	

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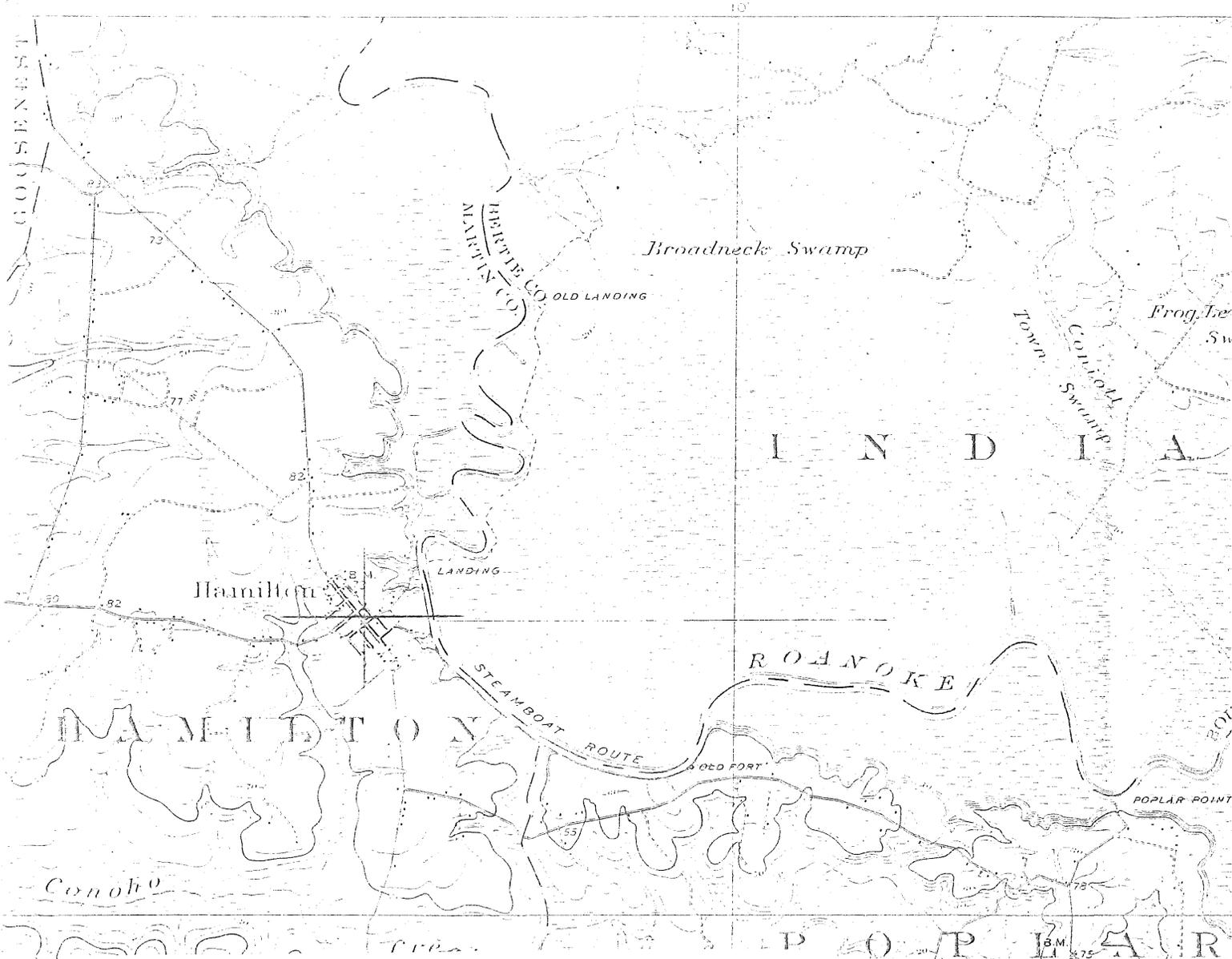
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- McCallum, James H. Martin County During the Civil War. Williamston: Enterprise Publishing Company, 1971.
- Martin County Records, Martin County Courthouse, Williamston, North Carolina (Subgroups: Wills, Deeds).
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Darden Hotel
 Hamilton
 North Carolina

USGS Map, Williamston Quadrangle
 Scale: 1:62500
 Date: 1901

<u>Latitude</u>			<u>Longitude</u>		
degrees	minutes	seconds	degrees	minutes	seconds
35	56	40	77	12	32

Goldpoint

