

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 Pelletier House and Wantland Spring
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Old Bridge Street at New River N/A not for publication
city, town Jacksonville N/A vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Onslow code 133 zip code 28540

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>2</u>	_____ objects
			<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Historic and Architectural Resources of Onslow County, NC

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. Fink, Jr. 9-25-89
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
Commerce/Trade: department store

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture: Museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival
Other: commercial/office

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick
walls wood
roof asphalt
other wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

SUMMARY:

The Pelletier House is a one-story Greek Revival frame office/residence situated on a bluff above the New River in downtown Jacksonville, North Carolina. Probably built in the 1850s, the Pelletier House is oriented with its three-bay narrow end fronting Old Bridge Street, the main street of Jacksonville during the nineteenth century. Other features of the building include a hipped roof which engages a front porch, a brick chimney rising through the one-room (formerly two-room) interior, and a back entrance. Between the Pelletier House and the river is Wantland Spring, which was a determinant in the location of the county courthouse at the site of Jacksonville in 1753.

PELLETIER HOUSE:

The foundation of the Pelletier House consists of stretcher-bond brick piers with header courses across the top. The brick cap of the interior brick chimney also has a top header course. Extending under the building and within the perimeter of the foundation is a hard-packed clay surface which projects up to six inches above the present surrounding ground level. Similar prepared clay surfaces have been observed under other nineteenth century Onslow County buildings (see Onslow County Multiple Property Documentation Form: Vernacular Dwellings. Mud-and-stick chimneys).

The Pelletier House has a frame structure with hewn sills and floor joists which are fastened together with pegs. Other framing connections are fastened with nails. Originally the Pelletier House was roofed with wood shingles (presently it is roofed with asphalt shingles). The building has plain frieze boards which are interrupted by plain corner boards at the back (north) corners of the house. A simple Greek Revival crown molding runs at the meeting of the frieze boards and the eaves.

Plain and molded trim surrounds the nine-over-six sash windows on the four sides of the structure. Originally these windows were fitted with lowered wooden shutters. The windows across the front under the porch may originally have extended to the floor. The engaged front porch has modern square posts with small molded caps, a late nineteenth or early twentieth century beaded tongue-and-groove ceiling, a rebuilt floor incorporating floor boards from the interior.

Originally the interior of the Pelletier House was divided into a front office and a rear dwelling room. The partition between these two rooms was interrupted by the chimney. The chimney has front and back fireplaces with original wooden mantles in the Greek Revival style. The front mantle has a simple molded post and lintel design.

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The back mantel has an even simpler post and lintel design, narrow frieze. The original plaster walls and ceilings and wooden flooring of the Pelletier House have been replaced.

In its present state the Pelletier House corresponds to its original form. During the late nineteenth century, Rufus Pelletier made additions to the house to accommodate his family. Off the back a frame two-room kitchen and dining room wing was added attached to the main block by a breezeway. This wing had weatherboard siding, six-over-six sash windows, an interior flue, and (by the early twentieth century) metal roofing. An early twentieth century photograph suggests that this wing was poorly constructed; the northeast corner of the wing had subsided and the weatherboard siding appears uneven (Tucker Littleton Collection). This wing, and a room or rooms added to the east side of the Pelletier House, burned during the late 1950s (Mrs. Roscoe Taylor, personal communication).

The Pelletier House was restored during the mid-1970s by the Onslow County Historical Society. The Historical Society replaced rotted and fire-damaged exterior and interior sheathing and replaced non-original porch posts with simple square posts in the Greek Revival style. The remnants of the wall dividing the front and rear rooms were also removed (Knox Council, personal communication). Other features which are not original include a back stoop and steps, front steps, and the transom and six-panel door of the off-center front entrance. Although a considerable portion of the architectural fabric of the Pelletier House dates to the 1970s restoration, the extent was justified considering the deteriorated condition of the house before restoration. Important original features such as the two mantels were preserved, and the restoration was for the most part accurate.

WANTLAND SPRING:

Wantland Spring issues from the base of the bluff below the Pelletier House, approximately fifteen feet from the present shore of the New River. The spring and its surroundings were improved in 1961. The spring is contained in a concrete basin with a concrete outflow channel leading to the river. A bronze plaque in the basin wall reads "WANTLAND SPRING/1731-1961". Near the spring are concrete-block retaining walls forming terraces planted in evergreen shrubs and concrete steps and walkways leading from the spring to the front yard of the Pelletier House and Old Bridge Street. The landscaped surroundings of the spring were incorporated into a larger riverside park located principally on city property when the latter was completed in 1986.

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)

Architecture

Commerce

Period of Significance

1850s - ca. 1900

Significant Dates

1850s

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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

SUMMARY

The Pelletier House and Wantland Spring are eligible for the National Register under Criteria A and C as a site of local architectural and historic significance. The house dates to the second quarter of the nineteenth century and is the oldest building in Jacksonville, North Carolina. The house belongs to the small group of Greek Revival buildings which survive in Onslow County. The Pelletier House probably had an original commercial component and may have served as Jacksonville's post office during the nineteenth century.

Wantland Spring, located at the east edge of the property at the base of the bluff containing the Pelletier House, has played a significant role in the development of the property as well as that of downtown Jacksonville. The spring was a determinant in the location of the county courthouse at the site of Jacksonville in 1753, and undoubtedly was a factor in the development here of the distillery operated by William Pelletier and two others as the Ward Montford Company from 1846 until it burned in 1851. William Pelletier's brother, Rufus Pelletier, acquired the property prior to 1854, and is believed to have had the Pelletier house constructed shortly thereafter as dual bachelor quarters and store, perhaps for the Ward Montford Company's retail operation.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

The Pelletier House was probably built by Rufus Ferrand Pelletier (b.1824), who moved to Jacksonville, North Carolina with his brother William P. Pelletier (b. 1819) in the 1840s (Taylor. U.S. Census). The two brothers quickly established themselves as merchants. In July 1846 William Pelletier and two prominent local landowners and merchants - George Ward and Edward W. Montford - purchased a turpentine distillery on the New River (Onslow County Deed Book 25, page 359). Rufus probably had some involvement in this partnership, although his name is never mentioned in connection with others. The distillery that Ward, Montford, and Pelletier purchased included "the turpentine still worm tube [and] one vessel or schooner called the Speck and one scow or flat" as well as a quarter-acre "still yard" located on the New River waterfront (probably the same parcel on which the Pelletier House was later built). During this period William Pelletier also bought a lot on the courthouse square where he operated a store (Onslow County Court Records. Onslow County Deed Book 28, page 124). Pelletier's store may have operated in a symbiotic relationship with the partnership's distillery, a combination not uncommon in Onslow County during the nineteenth century (see Onslow County Multiple Property Documentation Form: Naval Stores and Lumber Production in Onslow County, 1734-1938. Early Commercial Activity. Late Nineteenth Century Naval Stores Production).

The 1850 census of industry listed the product of "Ward Montfort Company" as \$50,000 worth of turpentine and other pine products. This value of product ranked third in the county but was only a few thousand dollars less than the product of the top-ranked distillery, that of David W. Sanders at Palo Alto. A year later, in the January 1851 act of amendment to Jacksonville's corporate limits, the distillery was referred to as "William P. Pelletier and Company" (NC Session Laws, 1850: 707).

In June 1851 Pelletier's distillery burned along with "fixtures, a quantity of spirits, turpentine, rosin, and oak staves [and] also a part of the bridge across New River" at a loss of \$2,500 (Wilmington Weekly Journal, June 13, 1851). Even if Ward and Montford absorbed some of the loss, the fire probably proved disastrous for William Pelletier's finances. References in deeds for adjacent lots, dating to 1854 and 1857, identify Rufus Pelletier as the owner of the still yard lot. (Onslow County Deed Book 27, page 289; Book 28, page 315). The brothers may have had title transferred in order to protect the property from seizure.

By 1857 Rufus Pelletier appears to have run into financial difficulties of his own, for in that year the still yard lot was sold at auction to Duncan Frazelle, possibly as a security on a bond (Onslow County Deed Book 45, page 292). There is evidence that Rufus reserved the right to use the property through private agreement with Duncan Frazelle and his son, James Frazelle. There is no indication that the property continued to function as a still yard, although it was described as such until the late nineteenth century. Rufus Pelletier bought the lot back from the Frazelles in 1885 (Onslow County Deed Book 45, page 294).

Rufus Pelletier engaged in a number of activities from the 1850s through the 1880s. In 1856 he served a one-year term as Jacksonville's postmaster (Taylor. Jacksonville's postmasters). The 1850 and 1860 censuses list him as a merchant; in the 1870 census he appears as a clerk in an unidentified store. From 1873 until 1879 Pelletier served

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again as Jacksonville's postmaster. During the mid-1880s he served as magistrate for the Jacksonville area (Branson, 1884). Local tradition asserts that Pelletier married couples in the front room of his house, a function probably associated with his term as magistrate (Mrs. Roscoe Taylor, personal communication).

After Rufus and his wife Joanna died by the beginning of the twentieth century, their daughter Eliza Pelletier Morton (1872-1955) inherited the house and lived in it until her death. By 1957 the Pelletier House had passed to Eliza's son, Phon Morton, who sold the house and 17,000 square feet of land to the Onslow County Historical Society in September 1957 (Onslow County Deed Book 253, page 274).

The Onslow County Historical Society set about restoring its new property. In 1974 society member Knox Council carried out the restoration of the house using lumber from a nineteenth century house that formerly stood in Pollocksville, North Carolina, and from one demolished Sabiston Building in downtown Jacksonville. Since that time the Pelletier House has served as the location of historical society gatherings.

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION:

Neither the documentary record nor the architectural features of the Pelletier House provide sufficient evidence to establish a precise date of construction. Nevertheless, indirect evidence points to an antebellum date of construction. In the 1860 census Rufus Pelletier was listed as living alone in Jacksonville. The fact that Rufus was living alone in 1860, without boarders or servants, suggests that his domicile was small, such as the backroom of the Pelletier House. According to local historian Mrs. Roscoe Taylor, Rufus built the Pelletier House as his office and bachelor quarters, an oral tradition suggested by the 1860 census (Rufus Pelletier did not marry until 1863 when he wed Joanna Hines). It seems likely that the Pelletier House was built by William or Rufus Pelletier between the 1851 fire and the 1857 sale or mortgage of the still yard lot.

The Pelletier House was clearly not intended originally as a permanent residence for a family. The building exhibits the small office form that was commonly employed in nineteenth century North Carolina small-scale construction (see "Architectural Context" below). Considering Rufus Pelletier's numerous commercial and public activities during the period, he would have required a store room or office space. The Pelletier House occupied an enviable commercial location adjacent to the Jacksonville waterfront and the New River bridge. It may not be coincidental that the Pelletier House is situated on the still yard lot of Ward, Montford, and Pelletier. Although there is no firm evidence that the firm continued to operate at the location after the 1851 fire, the Pelletier House could have served as the firm's store. Rufus Pelletier would have needed office space to serve him in his capacity as Jacksonville's postmaster in 1856 and 1873-79.

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ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT:

Stylistically the Pelletier House is related to other Greek Revival buildings built in Onslow during the 1850s, 1860s, and 1870s (see Onslow County Multiple Property Documentation Form: Stylish Dwellings. Greek Revival Style). The Pelletier House bears affinity to a smaller set of Greek Revival and Italianate houses built during the late 1860s which have front porches engaged under principal hip roofs. These three houses are the Murrill House (ON 460), which originally stood at Gum Branch and is now located at Half Moon, the demolished Huggins House, which originally stood on New Bridge Street in Jacksonville, and the Ennett-Hill House (ON 833) in the Sneads Ferry vicinity. The similarity of the Pelletier House to these late 1860s houses lends credence to the 1860s date of construction proposed by some local historians, but the narrow time range represented by these houses may be misleading - similar houses which do not survive may have been built at any time during the third quarter of the nineteenth century.

The Pelletier House shares other characteristics with the Ennett-Hill House and the Huggins House. The original section of the Ennett-Hill House is a one-story office with a front porch engaged under the principal hip roof. When the two-story portion of the house was built, this office was made into a side wing. The Huggins House had a detached office with a front porch engaged under a principal hip roof (Hathaway Price Collection). In both instances the offices were built roughly coeval with the main houses and conformed with them stylistically. Two other houses with detached offices, the Cox House on New Bridge Street and the Koonce House on Old Bridge Street, existed in Jacksonville during the late nineteenth century (Tucker Littleton Collection).

Assuming the Pelletier House was built as an office, it may have been intended as a component of a house-office ensemble which never materialized. The haphazard way in which Rufus Pelletier later made additions to the structure suggests that he had to make do with limited financial resources, and that he had resigned himself to living in his office on a permanent basis.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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:

Onslow County Museum

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property .4 acre

UTM References

A 1 8 2 7 7 2 1 0 3 8 4 7 9 8 0
Zone Easting Northing

B _____
Zone Easting Northing

C _____

D _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Onslow County-Jacksonville Tax Map, Parcel No. 120.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary corresponds to the present property boundaries containing the Pelletier House and Wantland Spring.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dan Pezzoni

organization _____

date 3/20/89

street & number 1214 Campbell Avenue SW

telephone (703) 343-8431

city or town Roanoke

state VA

zip code 24016

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Watts, Gordon P., Jr. "An Historical Reconnaissance and Assessment of the Potential for Submerged Cultural Resources in New River adjacent to a Proposed Waterfront Park, US 17 and Old Bridge Street, Onslow County." Washington, DC: 1985.

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Wilmington Weekly Journal. June 13, 1851.

Historian Presha Merritt conducted much of the local research that went into the preparation of this nomination.

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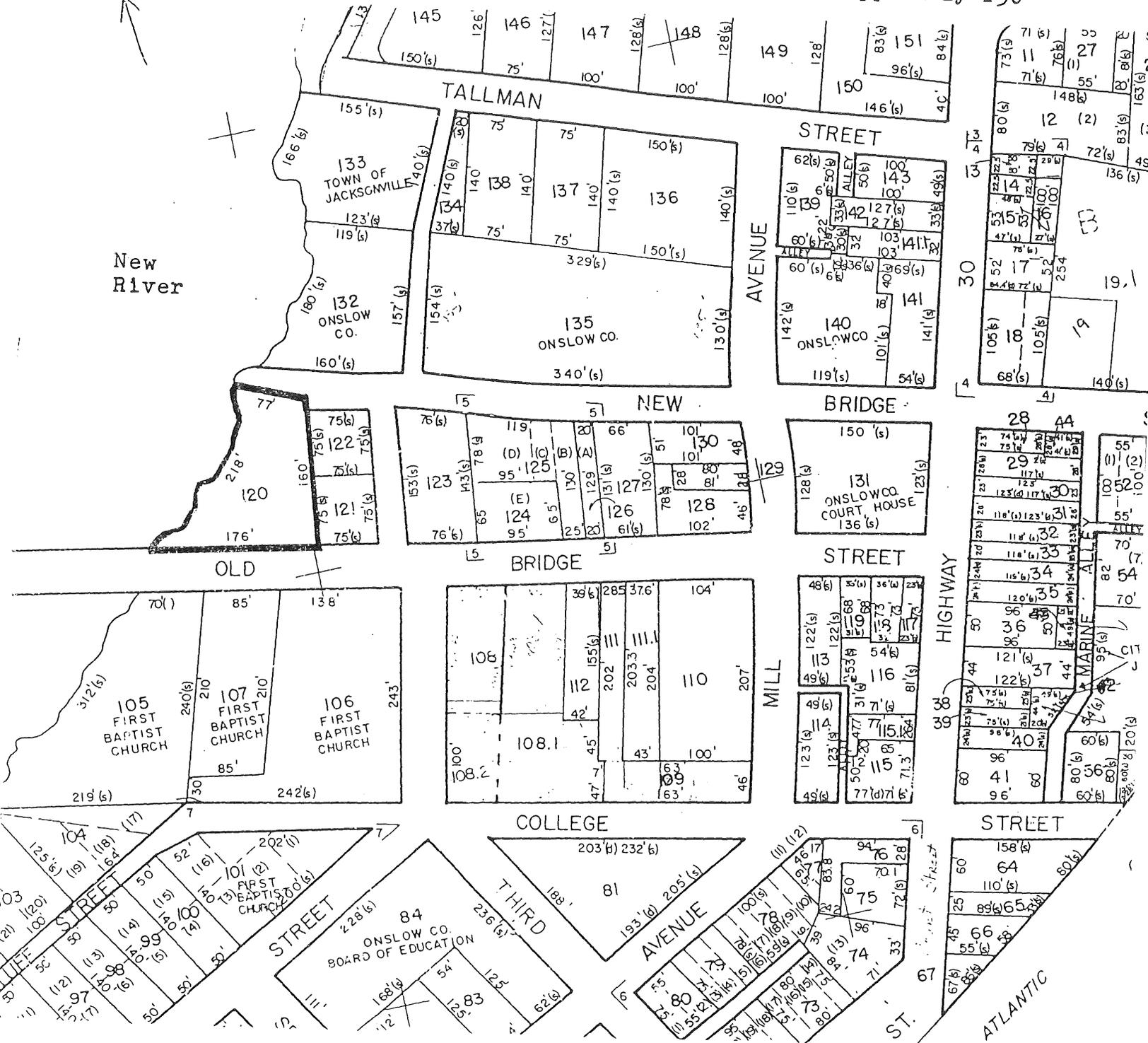
Unless otherwise noted, the following information pertains to all photographs:

- 1) Pelletier House and Wantland Spring
 - 2) Jacksonville, NC
 - 5) N. C. Division of Archives & History, Raleigh, NC
-
1. Pelletier House. Front (south end). Daniel Pezzoni; May 1988.
 2. Pelletier House. Back (north end). Daniel Pezzoni; May 1988.
 3. Pelletier House. Front room mantel. Cindy Craig; October 1985.
 4. Wantland Spring. View eastward. Cindy Craig; October 1985.
 5. Wantland Spring and the Pelletier House, showing former kitchen and dining room wing. Collection of Hathaway Price and the Tucker Littleton Collection, Search Room, North Carolina State Library, Raleigh, NC. Early 20th century.

Pelletier House and Wantland Spring

Jacksonville
 Jacksonville North USGS quadrangle
 Onslow County

Property boundary marked
 with heavy line
 Scale: 1" = approx'ly 150'



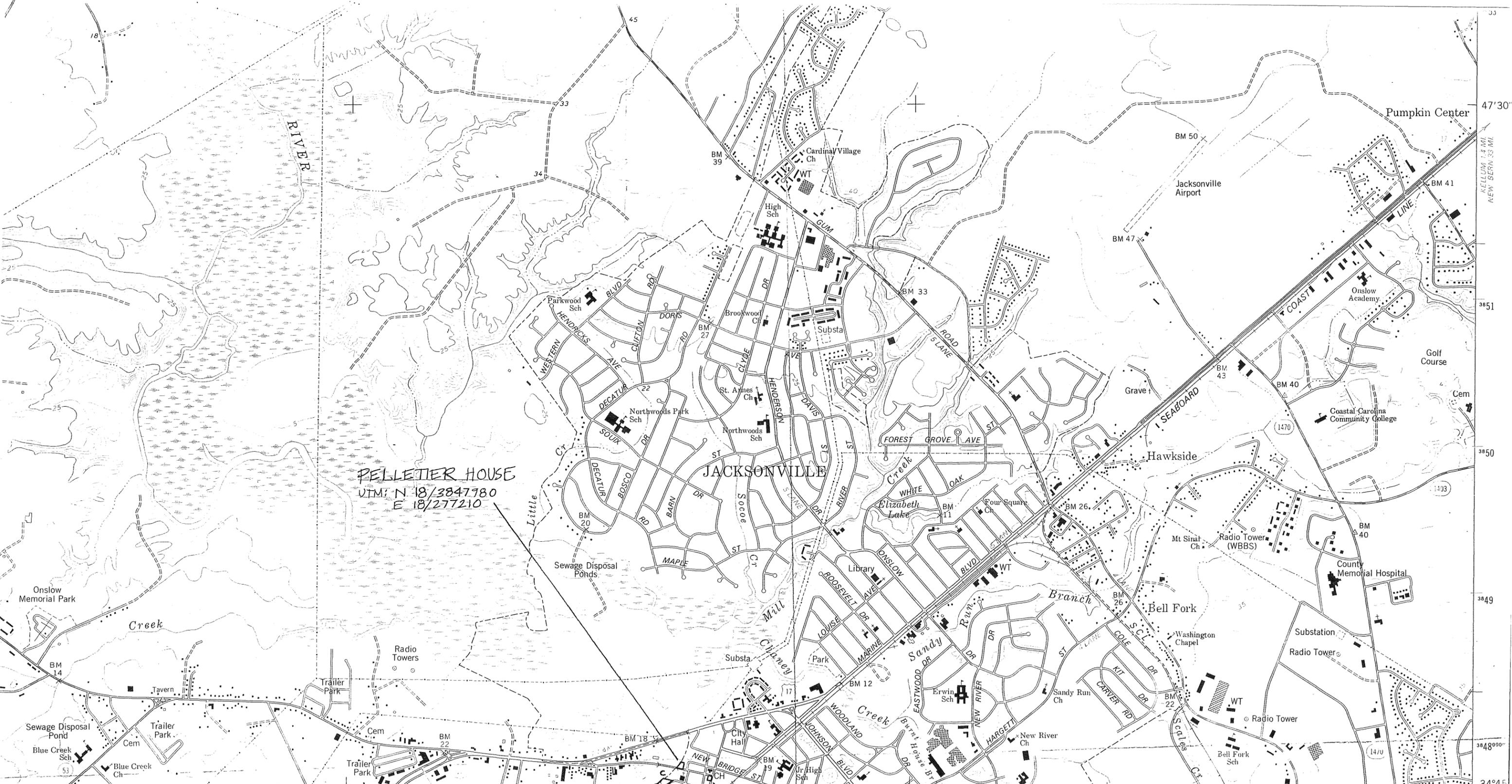
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E 18/277210

zone 18

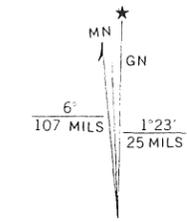
(photocopy of a portion of Onslow County
 Jacksonville tax map, drawn by Trumble-
 McGuirk and Associates, Atlanta, GA, 1977)



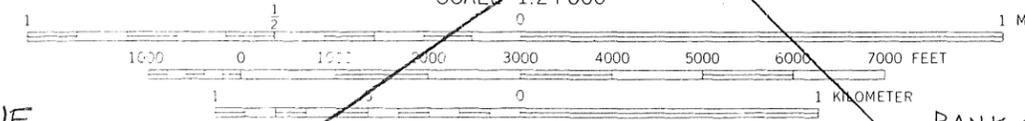
PELLETIER HOUSE
 UTM: N 18/3847780
 E 18/277210

JACKSONVILLE

Geological Survey
 Geodetic Survey
 Aerial photographs
 1978
 UTM coordinate
 Contour interval
 Buildings are shown

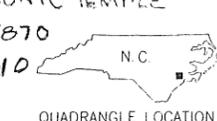


MILL AVENUE
 HISTORIC DISTRICT
 (continued on Jacksonville
 South Quad - see for UTM's)



CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET
 NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

BANK OF ONSLOW AND
 JACKSONVILLE MASONIC TEMPLE
 UTM: N 18/3847870
 E 18/277410



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

UTM GRID AND 1978 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092

JACKSONVILLE NORTH, N. C.
 N3445—W7722.5/7.5

