

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 Catherine Lake Historic District
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Junction of State Routes 1001 and 1211 N/A not for publication
city, town Catherine Lake N/A vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Onslow code 133 zip code 28574

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>8</u>	<u>6</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	_____	_____ objects
		<u>8</u>	<u>7</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. Pina, Jr. Signature of certifying official 9-25-89 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

Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwellingDomestic: single dwellingIndustry: manufacturing facilityCommerce/Trade: department storeCommerce/Trade: department store

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

Italianatefoundation brickGreek Revivalwalls woodOther: late Victorian millworkroof metalother concrete blockasphalt

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

SUMMARY:

The Catherine Lake Historic District comprises the heart of the mid- and late nineteenth century community of Catherine Lake. The tiny community is located in the pine woods of northwestern central Onslow County and is situated on the south shore of Catherine Lake, a roughly elliptical spring-fed pond approximately forty-five acres in size. During the nineteenth century the Catherine Lake community had a mixed industrial, commercial, and residential/resort character. The earliest component, industry, was focused at John A. Avirett's extensive turpentine distillery and successor distilleries on the south shore of the lake (the site of these distilleries lies within the historic district). To the south and inland from the distilleries, oriented east-west and parallel the present State Route 1001, a semi-public greensward was laid out by the late nineteenth century. Catherine Lake's affluent distillers, merchants, and professional men built stylish dwellings on the south side of this greensward and located their stores on the north side. The community's late nineteenth century school and church were formerly located at the eastern outskirts of the village. This zonation of industrial, commercial, residential, and institutional activities which developed during the late nineteenth century is still in evidence today.

The Catherine Lake Historic District embraces the properties on the north and south sides of the eastern and middle sections of the former greensward (the only sections where historic architectural resources survive) and includes seven principal contributing buildings, two principal noncontributing buildings, one secondary contributing building and four secondary noncontributing outbuildings and ruins for a total of fourteen buildings and sites. The jewel of the small district is the John A. Avirett house, a large frame Italianate house built circ 1850. Two other houses - the Boggs House, a circa 1873 Greek Revival cottage, and the Duffy house, a large late Victorian house of 1896 - comprise with the Avirett House, the most significant buildings in the district.

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Catherine Lake Historic District

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CATHERINE LAKE HISTORIC DISTRICT

National Register Status: C = contributing
N = noncontributing

All buildings are of weatherboarded frame construction unless otherwise noted.

List #	Date	Height	Comment/original owner or occupant, if known
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State Route 1001
(south side)

C 1.	ca.1850	2	<p><u>John A. Avirett, House.</u> The Italianate-style Avirett House is the most architecturally sophisticated ante-bellum house in Onslow County. The house has a T-shaped plan with a center hall that terminates in short transverse stair hall. Behind this hall is a two-story wing which forms the stem of the T. The house exterior has a metal-sheathed hip roof (formerly with observation deck) and bracketed eaves. The weatherboard siding and exterior detailing originally had a light brown and pink paint scheme. Around the front end of the house wraps a one-story veranda with bracketed eaves, panelled square columns with molded caps, and a beaded tongue-and-groove ceiling replacing a former plaster ceiling. House and porch are supported by brick piers; those under the porch with brick lattice in-between. The front entry has side lights and a transom. The large-paned, floor-to-ceiling six-over-nine sash windows have operable lower sashes that lift behind the fixed upper sash into a wall pocket. These windows are protected by full-length louvered wooden shutters. The house is entirely constructed of circular-sawn lumber.</p>
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The focus of the interior of the house is a circular stair located in the transverse hall which pivots around a central mast-like shaft. From a hall in the upstairs a narrower second flight of the stair leads to the attic (the former observation deck). Running up the wall alongside the stair is a simulated wooden wainscot painted onto the plaster. The wainscot is brown divided into raised panels by black lines.

The plaster walls and ceilings of the house retain their original colors which range from pale yellow and salmon pink to pale lime green. The house abounds in decorative molded plasterwork, most notably in the entry hall which has a foliated plaster ceiling medallion from which a lamp or chandelier formerly hung. The west front room has an ornate cornice with applied plaster florets and a decoratively bordered square recess in the center of the ceiling that provided a surround for a missing circular medallion. The east front room has a coved cornice. In the center of the ceilings of the upstairs bedrooms are circular holes that apparently served as part of the ventilation system.

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Throughout the house are sumptuously molded baseboards and door and window surrounds. The window surrounds of the east front room have shallow peaked lintels and battered sides reminiscent of the Egyptian Revival style. All front-room windows have wooden gates with decorative recessed panels, several of which bear original exterior paint colors. These gates are said to have prevented workers and others in the yard from peering into the house. Beneath the windows of the rear dining room and the floor are grained panels. The dining room floor has alternating dark and light stained boards giving a striped effect.

The five - and - six-panel doors of the house have well-executed graining, some with light-colored raised panels and darker, mahogany-colored rails and stiles. The backs of some closet doors are painted light brown and pink. Mantels are in the Greek Revival style with molded pilasters supporting heavy frieze boards. The mantels are painted black - the one in the front room with finely veined marbleizing in gold paint.

Leading up to the house is a walk lined by linear flower beds bordered with coquina rock. Other, circular beds are bordered by similar rock. These beds appear in an early twentieth century photograph and may be part of the original landscaping. The yard also contains remnants of terra cotta urns, perhaps used as flower pots.

N 2. ca. 1850 1 John A. Avirett House Kitchen. Directly behind the rear dining room of the Avirett House are the ruins of a two-room board-and-batten sided kitchen. The brick piers, hewn sills, and brick chimney with two arched fireplaces are the principal remnants of the structure. Formerly a covered walkway extended from the kitchen to a door on the back wall of the dining room. A Federal-style mantel salvaged from the kitchen may have originated in an earlier Avirett house.

C 3. 1896 2 Rodolph Duffy House. The Duffy house is a large double pile center-hall plan dwelling with late Victorian detailing. Across the front is a one-story porch with hip roof supported by classical columns and with a sloping beaded tongue-and-groove ceiling. The one-story ell has a side porch with chamfered posts. Other exterior features of the house include corbelled caps on chimneys that rise through the interior, cornice and frieze board returns, molded caps on corner boards, and arched louvered vents in the gables. The inset front entry has an ornamental door with double round-arched upper panel and a one-pane transom. The rear entrance has a four-panel door with raised panels and two-pane transom. Windows are six-over-six sash.

On the interior considerable original detailing survives including four-panel doors, molded architraves, and a hall stair with turned newel post, square balusters, and a vertical beaded tongue-and-groove wainscot with molded chair rail. Two decorative mantels survive in the downstairs: the one in the dining room has chamfered pilasters and a frieze board emblazoned with raised panels. Also in the dining room are built-in china cabinets with lead-mutined glazed doors.

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|-------|--------------------------|---|---|
| C 4. | ca. 1900 | 1 | Board-and batten sided smokehouse |
| N 5. | mid-20th century | 1 | Wood-sided shed |
| N 6. | 3rd quarter 20th century | 1 | Metal-sided shed |
| C 7. | ca. 1890 | 1 | <p><u>Jay Franklin Boggs House Kitchen and Dining Room.</u> Moved in the mid-twentieth century from its former position as an addition to the rear ell of the neighboring Boggs house, this two-room kitchen and dining room has a metal sheathed roof, asbestos and aluminum siding, and a concrete-block foundation. The hip-roofed front (formerly side) porch has been partially enclosed and reworked but it retains a single decoratively chamfered post with molded cap. Off the back of the structure (now used as a dwelling) is a large shed addition. The structure has two-over-two sash windows, cornice returns, and diamond-shaped louvered vents in the gables.</p> |
| C 8. | ca. 1873 | 1 | <p><u>Jay Franklin Boggs House.</u> The Greek Revival style Boggs House has a double-pile center-hall plan and is raised on a foundation of brick piers. Through the house rise brick chimneys with decorative hounds-tooth courses at the chimney caps. The original front porch was supported by square wood posts with molded caps similar to the caps on the house's corner boards. During the second quarter of the twentieth century the original porch was replaced with a Bungalow style porch with tapered square wood posts on brick plinths (pilasters from the original porch survive on the house wall, however). Other exterior features include frieze boards, six-over-six sash windows, and a rear shed addition. The house has simple Greek Revival interior detailing.</p> |
| N 9. | 1940s | 1 | Small weatherboard sided house. |
| C 10. | 1890-1896 | 1 | <p><u>Owen B. Cox House.</u> The Cox house has a T-shaped plan with a projecting front wing, a brick pier and concrete-block foundation, asphalt shingles over metal roofing, vinyl siding, and two-over-two sash windows. Above the roof rise decoratively corbelled brick chimney caps; in the gables are reworked diamond-shaped vents. Across the front of the house extends a reworked hip-roofed porch. On the west side is a modern addition. A back porch has been enclosed in recent years. Although the house has undergone numerous changes, it retains its basic integrity.</p> |

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State Route 1001
(north side)

- C 11. ca. 1873; early 20th century 1 Jay Franklin Boggs House Ell. This much altered frame building formerly stood as the rear ell of the Boggs House (8). During the early twentieth century it was moved across State Route 1001 to its present location and converted into a store. The building has a gable roof, asphalt siding, and hewn sills.
- N 12. 2nd quarter 20th century 1 Store. This gable-fronted frame store building with traditional form and engaged front porch has been added to several times. It now serves as a gas station, convenience mart, and beauty parlor.
- C 13. ca. 1900 1 Brown House. The frame Brown House has been much altered and added to over the years. The house has an exterior gable brick chimney with a stepped base and detached stack, an ell, six-over-six sash windows, frieze board returns and molded caps on corner boards. The interior originally had a center-hall plan and retains a mantel with applied panel doors. The present wrap-around porch with square wood posts on brick plinths replaced a smaller front porch in the 1940s. A two room addition has been made to the ell.
- N 14. ca. 1986 1 Trailer

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

Industry

Commerce

Community Planning and Development

Period of Significance

ca. 1850-ca. 1920

Significant Dates

ca. 1850

early 1870s

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.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Catherine Lake Historic District comprises the remaining portion of the historic residential and commercial quarter of the tiny Onslow County community of Catherine Lake. The community ranks among the most significant sites of industrial and commercial activity relating to turpentine production in the county, although the buildings directly associated with these activities have disappeared (see Onslow County Multiple Documentation Form: Naval Stores and Lumber Production in Onslow County, 1734-1938). The district is also significant for its fine collection of nineteenth century houses built by Catherine Lake's affluent distillers, merchants, and professional men. The jewel of the district is the splendid Italianate "summer house" built in the 1850s by Onslow County's largest antebellum turpentine planter, John A. Avirett, Sr.. Catherine Lake once boasted a semi-public greensward, an unusual plan feature consistent with the community's quasi-resort character (a vestige of this greensward survives). The period of significance for the Catherine Lake Historic District extends from circa 1850 until circa 1920 and brackets the dates of construction for the six contributing buildings in the district. The end date of the period of significance also marks the date by which turpentine distilling had ceased at Catherine Lake.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

Catherine Lake is the largest in a chain of spring-fed ponds in northwest Onslow County that were known as the Crane Ponds during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Brown: 354). Catherine Lake itself was known as Ashe's Pond until the mid-nineteenth century when, according to local tradition, it was named after a school teacher and sweetheart of John A. Avirett, Jr. named Catherine Cole (Brown: 354). The early history of settlement at the lake is obscure, but by the late ante-bellum period three families owned most of the land on or near the lake: the Aviretts, the Duffys, and the Murrills. These families controlled large acreages of longleaf pine forest from which they derived crude turpentine and lumber.

By far the most prominent of these families were the Aviretts, an ancestor of whom had hosted George Washington on his southern tour of 1791. John A. Avirett, Sr. (ca. 1797- ca. 1863) established a sizable industrial complex on the south side of the lake by the 1840s. John Avirett, Sr.'s son, James Battle Avirett (1837-1912), wrote about his father's plantation and the Catherine Lake distillery complex in his 1901 memoir, The Old Plantation. How We Lived in Great House and Cabin before the War. According to James Battle, during the period around 1850 the Catherine Lake complex included "two large distilleries", a windmill for supplying the distilleries with lakewater, cooper shops, "large sheds for storing the barrel timber", a glue house, mule stables, a sawmill (probably steam driven), and a "large cluster of houses", presumably where Avirett's slave distillers, box-cutters, and coopers lived. At the east end of this complex stood the "comfortable looking... summer house of the old planter", the 1850s Italianate style house that still stands at the lake (Avirett: 65-66, 76).

John A. Avirett, Sr.'s turpentine "orchards" comprised 22,000 acres of his 25,000 acre plantation, and in 1850 generated \$12,500 worth of crude turpentine (Avirett: 64; U.S. Census, 1850 industrial schedules). The two distilleries generated \$35,000 worth of spirits of turpentine and other products in 1850. This is below the \$60,000 yearly income James Battle Avirett claimed for his father (exclusive of earnings from agricultural products), a figure which may have represented peak production (Avirett: 69; Polson).

For reasons unknown, John A. Avirett, Sr. sold his vast holdings in 1856 and 1857. Council Wooten, who operated a large brickworks in New Bern in 1850, purchased Avirett's Catherine Lake property for \$20,000 in 1857 (Sandbeck; 464; Onslow County Deed Book 28, page 86). Council Wooten appears to have delegated the onsite operation of the Catherine Lake distilleries to his son or younger relative, James M. Wooten, who operated a store at the lake from the late 1850s until the early 1870s (Branson, 1867/68).

The two decades following the Civil War saw the transformation of Catherine Lake from the industrial quarter of a vast plantation to a bona fide community of affluent farmers, merchants, distillers, and professional men. The change was foreshadowed before the war with the break-up of the Avirett holdings; after the war, no single individual appears to have been capable of marshalling the capital and labor required to run a turpentine operation on the scale of the Aviretts'.

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The post-bellum transformation of Catherine Lake was also manifested in a proliferation of stores at the lake. During the late 1860s only James Wooten and his partner Simon B. Taylor (1834- ca. 1925) operated a store at the lake (Branson, 1872, 1878). Between 1878 and 1883 two more merchants - George Simmons and James Hartsfield - joined Boggs and Taylor (Chataigne, 1883). In 1883 Catherine Lake boasted four merchants - as many merchants as resided in the well-established town of Swansboro and the newly-incorporated town of Richlands. The merchants of the nineteenth century Onslow County appear to have functioned as brokers for the small farmers of the area, accepting produce (often turpentine) in exchange for merchandise. This explains why Onslow County merchants established their stores in conjunction with distilleries (see Onslow County Multiple Property Documentation Form: Naval Stores and Lumber Production in Onslow County, 1734-1938. Early Commercial Activity and Late Nineteenth Century Naval Stores Production). The two leading merchants at the Lake, Taylor and Boggs, also operated the two distilleries at the lake during the 1880s. In the 1890s they were joined by O.B. Cox, who also operated a distillery and store (Branson, 1896, 1897).

Beginning in the early 1870s the heirs of Council Wooten began to sell off large house lots "according to the plan of dividing the land on the south side of [Catherine Lake]" (Onslow County Deed Book 32, page 178). These lots extended from the Avirett House (described as the "main building" at the lake) westward along the south side of the present State Route 1001 and reaching back approximately 1000 feet to Big Branch. Jay Franklin Boggs built his one-story Greek Revival style house on one of these lots during the early 1870s, and lawyer Rodolph Duffy built his imposing two-story house on the lot between the Boggs and Avirett houses in 1896.

During the late nineteenth century a linear greensward developed in front of these houses (it appears distinctly in a Soil Conservation Service photograph of 1938). This greensward was crossed by cart paths and is recalled by some informants who note that the "road came right up to the houses" (Percy Brown, personal communication). The 1870s deeds relating to the division of the Wooten property do not mention the greensward; probably it was laid out later during the nineteenth century by the community leaders who lived upon it.

A semi-public greensward was in keeping with the quasi-resort character of the village. James Battle Avirett spoke of the "Balsamic properties" of the section "which the pine tree is constantly distilling in the air, [that] seem to counteract any poison from malaria," and of the lake itself, "covered over with the pads of water lillies, in season very beautiful with their large white flowers" (and which still abound in the lake) (Avirett: 65,69). The supposed beneficial influence of pine forests was also ascribed to the Sand Hills region of central southern North Carolina, where the pines were believed to distill ozone into the air (Ruth Little, personal communication).

It is probably no coincidence that Charles Duffy, Sr., an Irish-educated physician whom John A. Avirett, Sr. recruited to northern Onslow County, chose to settle near the northern shore of Catherine Lake in the 1830s. Charles Duffy's son Rodolph later settled in the village proper (Onslow County Deed Book 22, page 329). The Catherine Lake area also boasts two mineral springs, the sulphur-smelling Alum Spring on South-west Creek, and "Little Alum Spring" on Chapel Run (the latter was located on Dr. Duffy's property, but it is not known whether he used its waters for medicinal purposes).

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Catherine Lake may have been considered particularly healthful for one other reason: the presence of distilleries at the location. Throughout eighteenth and nineteenth century American history the burning of rosin, turpentine, tobacco, sulphur, and other aromatic substances was thought to ward off pestilence. During the 1793 yellow fever epidemic at Philadelphia, citizens lit bonfires in the streets to purify the air (Pcwell: 47). Residents of New Bern, North Carolina burned turpentine in the streets during an epidemic in that city (Sandbeck). John Avirett, Sr. himself resorted to this practice, filling iron vats set up in the living areas of his plantation with the "resinous residium from his turpentine distilleries" and setting them alight. The burning dross "infuse[d] the fumes of cooking turpentine in the air and thus purif[ied] it" (Avirett: 49). It seems likely that the turpentine dross fires at Catherine Lake's distilleries were believed to reduce the incidence of yellow fever and malaria at the location. Such commonly - held beliefs may have induced well-to-do individuals to settle at the village. James Battle Avirett noted that his father built his summer house at the lake specifically to escape the malarial conditions of the surrounding country (Avirett: 66).

The population of Catherine Lake was estimated at seventy-five in 1889 and 1896 and ranked fourth in size of the communities of the county for those years (Eranson, 1889 and 1896). As the location developed into a community, a school and a church were established. In 1871 Charles Duffy sold an acre lot at the east end of the village to the committee for the Public Schools of Richlands Township, a lot upon which a schoolhouse had already been built (Onslow County Deed Book 31, page 135). This school (demolished by the mid-twentieth century) was known as the Catherine Lake Academy and was a frame building with a typical nave-plan form (Branson, 1884, 1896, Percy Brown, personal communication). The first church established at the lake was the (Former) Catherine Lake Baptist Church (ON 600) built in 1890 on a lot beside the schoolhouse lot. This highly-decorative but otherwise traditional nave-plan frame building was moved in recent years to an isolated Onslow County location to make way for the present modern brick Catherine Lake Baptist Church building (located outside the district).

From all indications turpentine distilling continued at the lake into the early twentieth century but had ceased by the 1920s (Ford). Old stores were razed and new ones built on the north side of the greensward throughout the first half of the twentieth century, including the 1926 Cox and Collins Service Station (demolished) (Lucille Collins, personal communication). Little domestic architecture was built in the village between 1900 and the mid-twentieth century, when construction picked up due to the establishment of Camp Lejeune at Jacksonville. The current population of the area within the historic confines of the village (several times larger than the historic district) probably numbers between 100 and 200 individuals.

Although unique within Onslow County, communities with coexisting industrial and resort components such as Catherine Lake were not without precedent in south-eastern North Carolina. Another example was the town of Waccamaw in Columbus County. The town of Waccamaw (originally named Flemington) was established in 1852 on a site between the right-of-way of the Wilmington and Manchester Railroad and the north shore of Lake Waccamaw. The motivation of the town's proprietor, Josiah Maultsby, is not known, but the presence in the town plan of a "common" on the lake shore and a linear

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"public square" between the lake and the railroad implies that a resort character was originally intended. After the Civil War, a local boom in naval stores production and establishment of the North Carolina Lumber Company, which produced cypress shingles on the south shore of the lake and boated them across to the town for shipment on the railroad, contributed to the growth of the village. Resort development was far more advanced at Lake Waccamaw than it was at Catherine Lake, owing to the proximity of the railroad. A hotel had been established at the village as early as 1869, and by the early twentieth century, there were boardwalks, piers, pavilions, and bathhouses (Parker and Little).

White Lake in Bladen County is another nineteenth century lakeside community in southeastern North Carolina which may bear comparison with Catherine Lake; although, much less is known about its history.

BRIEF HISTORIES OF SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS:

1. John A. Avirett, Sr. House (Inventory List Numbers 1 and 2). John Alfred Avirett Sr. (ca. 1797- ca. 1863) was Onslow County's largest landowner and one of its leading naval stores producers during the ante-bellum period (see Onslow County Multiple Property Documentation Form: Naval Stores and Lumber Production in Onslow County, 1734-1938. Early Nineteenth Century Naval Stores Production). Avirett's 1851 main plantation house (ON 356) stood beside the mosquito-infested bottoms of the New River. During the summer he was drawn to the better-drained pine woods around Catherine Lake in the western section of his vast holdings. According to his son James Battle Avirett (1837-1912), who wrote about his father's plantation in The Old Plantation. How We Lived in Great House and Cabin Before the War (1901), John A. Avirett built a summer house at the lake "far away (some three miles) from the malaria that may be lurking around and the mosquitos buzzing about the old mansion of the plantation proper."

Local tradition ascribes an 1850s date of construction for the Avirett house, a date borne out by the Italianate and Greek Revival styling of the house (see Onslow County Multiple Property Documentation Form: Stylish Dwellings. Greek Revival Style. Italianate Style). The circular-sawn lumber used in the house was probably milled at Avirett's own saw mill, which stood near the lake. The bricks used in the foundations and chimneys of the house were probably made locally, except for the fire bricks in the fireplace linings, which are stamped "Perth Amboy, NJ".

The detailing of the Avirett house is far more sophisticated than that found in any other contemporary Onslow County house and suggests skilled craftsmen from outside the area (possibly from Wilmington) performed the work.

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The house at Catherine Lake shares some features with Avirett's 1851 house at the plantation seat, such as two-tone graining of doors and gold-on-black marbleizing of mantels (Polson). Although James Battle Avirett wrote at great length about many aspects of his father's plantation, he was generally quiet on the subject of the house at the lake, other than to note that it was "comfortable". James Battle's reminiscences spanned the decades of the 1840s and 1850s when he was a child and adolescent fond of swimming and boating on the lake (Avirett: 65, 71-72).

John A. Avirett, Sr. built his house in part as a refuge from the malaria and miasmas of his principal seat, but also in part as a base for the supervision of his distilleries at the lake. This task he probably delegated to his son John Jr. (b.1829) after 1850. The house originally had a covered roof deck which facilitated the monitoring of activities at the lake (as well as affording a pleasant vista). It is possible that Avirett built the house at the lake for the use of his son John as much as for his own use. A well-known local legend asserts that John Jr. built the house for his sweetheart, a teacher from New Bern named Catherine Cole, who later jilted him (Brown: 354).

For unknown reasons John A. Avirett, Sr. was induced to sell his Onslow County holdings and move to Goldsboro in 1857 (Polson). Council Wooten became the new owner of the Catherine Lake improvements (Onslow County Deed Book 28, page 86). James M. Wooten, Council's son or younger relative, probably occupied the house from 1857 until the early 1870s (James Wooten or another Wooten served as a physician in the Catherine Lake community during the 1880s) (Branson, 1867/68, 1878, 1884, 1889). During the early 1870s Council Wooten's 11,000 acre pine plantation constituted the second largest farm in the county (Branson, 1872). During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries George H. Simmons owned the house. Simmons was listed as a prominent farmer of the section and a county commissioner in period business directories and owned and operated a store (the Wooten and Taylor Store) and a grist mill at or near the lake. During the mid-twentieth century the Avirett house was unoccupied and suffered from neglect and vandalism. In the 1970s the present owner of the house embarked on a sympathetic restoration which is bringing the house back to its former grandeur.

2. Rodolph Duffy House (3-6) Rodolph Duffy (1855-1924) was the son of Charles Duffy, Sr., an Irish-born and educated physician who settled at Catherine Lake in the 1830s. Rodolph received an education in law during the late 1870s. In 1889 he served on the Onslow County Board of Education and in the year 1896 (the year he built his house at Catherine Lake) he was listed as a Catherine Lake attorney (Branson, 1889, 1896). In 1900 Rodolph listed his occupation as attorney and farmer; in 1910 he listed it as farmer alone (U.S. Census, population schedules for 1900 and 1910). Rodolph Duffy owned the Alum Spring property south of Catherine Lake during the early twentieth century (Onslow County Deed Book 79, page 394).

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3. Jay Franklin Boggs House (7-9, 11) Jay Franklin Boggs (b. 1841) was a native of Orange County, North Carolina who served with Colonel Simon B. Taylor during the Civil War. According to family tradition, Taylor convinced Boggs to relocate to Catherine Lake and assist him with his distilling and mercantile business (Carl Boggs, personal communication). In 1873 Boggs bought a house lot from the heirs of Council Wooten and built a house (Onslow County Deed Book 32, page 178). About 1876 he built a gable-fronted frame store (demolished) across Route 1001 from his house and commenced the sale of groceries and liquor (Carl Boggs, personal communication. Branson, 1878). By 1883 Boggs had established his own turpentine distillery at the lake which he operated through the 1890s (Chataigne, 1883. Branson, 1897). After 1910 Boggs moved to a house at Gum Branch near Richlands and his daughter Mary (b. 1878) acquired the Catherine Lake house, which she apparently divided into apartments by the 1920s. The house was sold out of the family by 1956 (Kate Bender, personal communication).
4. Owen B. Cox House (10). The Cox family have resided in the Catherine Lake area from the eighteenth century. Owen B. Cox (b. 1854) farmed in the Catherine Lake vicinity before moving to the community (probably during the early 1890s) where he established a turpentine distillery and a store (Branson, 1896). Cox probably built his house at the lake during the early 1890s. Owen's son William, who was also a merchant, occupied the house during the second quarter of the twentieth century.

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: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Approximately 19 acres

UTM References

A

1	8
---	---

2	6	5	7	5	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	8	5	5	3	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

B

1	8
---	---

2	6	5	5	8	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	8	5	5	2	9	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

C

1	8
---	---

2	6	5	4	9	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	8	5	5	5	7	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The district boundaries are illustrated on the accompanying tax map.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the district are drawn to include contributing buildings and their lots and do not correspond to the full historic extent of the village, owing to modern intrusions.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Daniel Pezzoni date March 20, 1989

organization _____ telephone (703) 343-8431

street & number 1214 Campbell Ave SW city or town Roanoke state VA zip code 24016

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
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- Historian Presha Merritt conducted much of the local research that went into the preparation of this nomination.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Catherine Lake Historic District

Section number 10 Page 1

UTM references (continued)

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

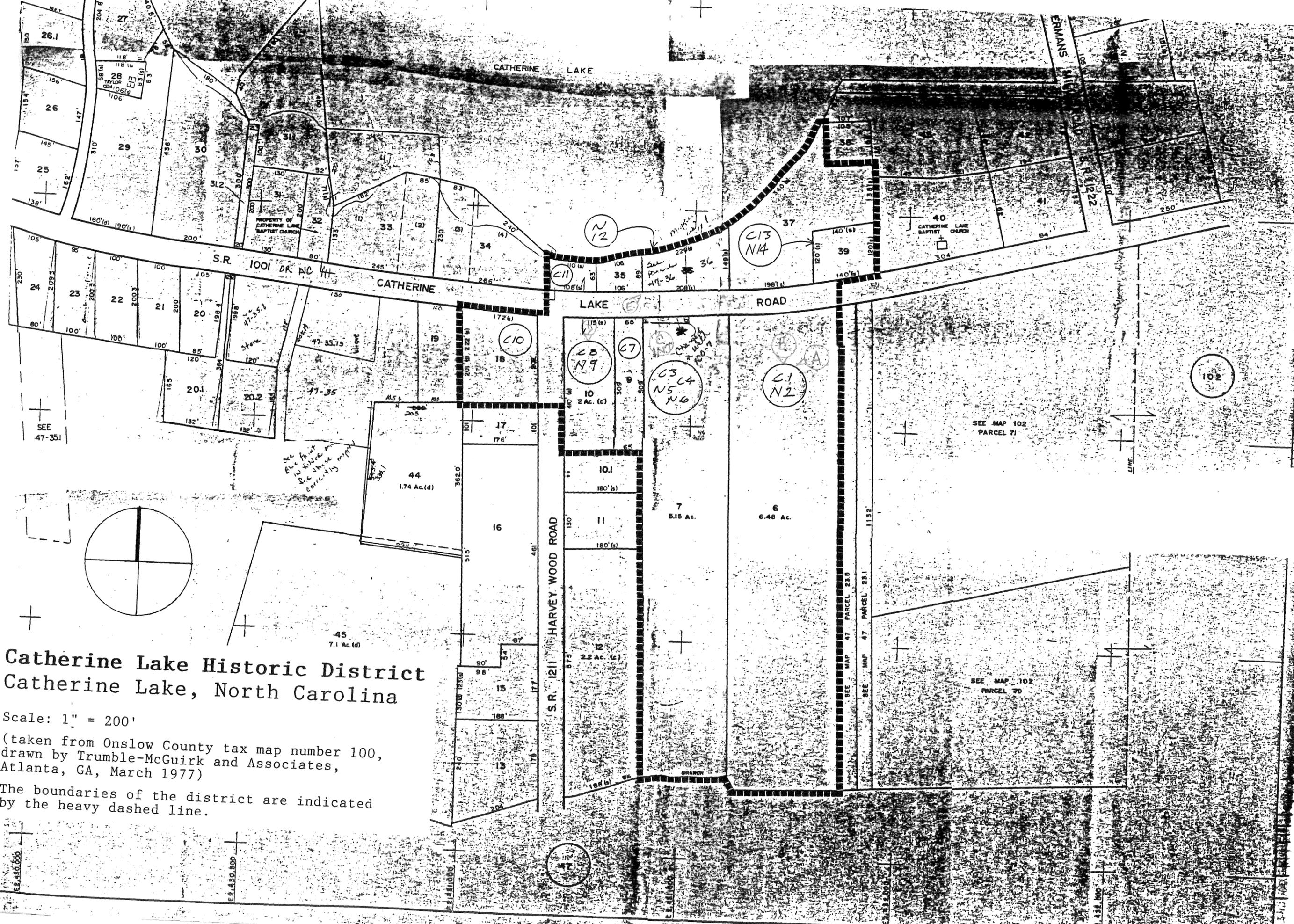
Catherine Lake Historic District

Section number Photos Page 1

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

- 1) Catherine Lake Historic District
 - 2) Catherine Lake, NC
 - 3) Daniel Pezzoni
 - 5) N.C. Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC
-
- A. John A. Avirett House. Main and east elevations (to the wouthwest). 5/88.
 - B. John A. Avirett House. Main (north) facade. Copy of a c. 1920 photograph in the possession of Thelma Langley, owner of the John A. Avirett House, Catherine Lake.
 - C. Rodolph Duffy House. Mantelpiece in southwest room of main block of house. 2/88.
 - D. Jay Franklin Boggs House. Main elevation (to south). 1/88.
 - E. Store. View to northeast. 2/88.
 - F. Aerial view of Catherine Lake (north is top of photo. From 1938-40 series taken by U.S. Forest Service. Copy of an original photograph in the N. C. Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC

All photographs are keyed to the resource map.



Catherine Lake Historic District
Catherine Lake, North Carolina

Scale: 1" = 200'

(taken from Onslow County tax map number 100,
 drawn by Trumble-McGuirk and Associates,
 Atlanta, GA, March 1977)

The boundaries of the district are indicated
 by the heavy dashed line.

E. 430.000
 E. 430.500
 E. 431.000
 E. 431.500

