

State of North Carolina
Division of Archives and History

Richmond COUNTY

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR

QUAD

MULTIPLE RESOURCE OR THEMATIC NOMINATION

1 NAME

HISTORIC
H.C. Watson House
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
526 Caroline Street
CITY, TOWN
Rockingham
STATE
North Carolina
VICINITY OF
8th
CODE
037
COUNTY
Richmond
CODE
153
NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

3 CLASSIFICATION

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

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
John D. Chalk Jr.
STREET & NUMBER
526 Caroline Street
CITY, TOWN
Rockingham
STATE
North Carolina
VICINITY OF
28379

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC
Richmond County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER
114 E. Franklin St.
CITY, TOWN
Rockingham
STATE
North Carolina
28379

6 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
Heather M. Hallenberg
ORGANIZATION
Consultant for
STREET & NUMBER
Archives and History, Survey and Planning Branch
CITY OR TOWN
Raleigh
DATE
May 31, 1981
TELEPHONE
(919) 733-6545
STATE
North Carolina
27611

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input 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 H. C. Watson House, located at 526 Caroline Street approximately one-half mile south of downtown Rockingham, was constructed in the mid-1880s as a High Victorian residence. During a remodeling effort of the early 1900s, the two story frame house received numerous Classical Revival additions.

In Rockingham during the early 1900s, fortunes were being made in the textile industry and related commercial enterprises. This newly acquired wealth was manifested in a burst of residential construction. Because of the resources available and the desire to keep a status residence, wealthy owners of older homes continually remodeled to keep pace with changing architectural trends. Rockingham's elite who regarded the house as a visual symbol of prosperity were drawn to the theatrical and grandiose expression of the Classical Revival Style.

The elegant two story pedimented portico with fluted Ionic columns, dentiled cornice, formal wrap-around porch, and attached porte-cochere demonstrate the strong influence of the Classical Revival Style, as do the striking beveled and leaded glass door and window transoms and the crowning upper deck or widow's walk. The truncated hipped roof exhibits a colorful, decorative use of slate shingle work; the only example in the Rockingham vicinity. Features retained from its Victorian origins include ornamental splayed door surrounds, long narrow paired second story windows, and rounded transom and sidelights surrounding the entrance to the balcony.

The dramatic approach to the H. C. Watson House, which extends across Caroline Street east to U. S. 1 South, is flanked on either side by handsome, mature pecan trees. Two substantial magnolias frame the residence. Compatible rear outbuildings include a frame, gabled three-car garage situated to the north and a small barn and detached cookhouse located to the south.

The interior of the H. C. Watson House consists of a center hall plan with four rooms on either side. Small kitchen and bathroom additions have been made to the rear and sides of the house.

In ca. 1895, H. C. Watson commissioned an itinerate Irish craftsman to stylishly update the entrance hall and two front parlors of the house with exceptionally fine and unspoiled plasterwork.¹ The cornices of the south parlor are pierced with a highly decorative leafy pattern and the cornice of the central hall features an alternating series of small plaster modillions and flowerettes. The ceiling medallions are formed from a repetitive use of leaves and flowers in a circular pattern. Other applied plaster motives include large ornamental bosses, elaborately scrolled console brackets supporting shallow arched niches, and elegantly curved window pediments. The resulting effect is richly designed and beautifully executed. The H. C. Watson House is distinguished as possessing the most notable and well preserved late nineteenth century plasterwork in the Rockingham vicinity and perhaps Richmond County.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

____ NATIONAL

____ STATE

____ **X** LOCAL**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 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

ca. 1885, ca. 1900

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

An analysis of the architectural fabric of the H. C. Watson House suggests that it was built in ca. 1885 and remodeled in the early 1900s in the Classical Revival Style. At this productive time in Rockingham's history, it was not uncommon for the wealthiest of Rockingham's merchants and industrialists to remodel their homes in keeping with the times; the H. C. Watson House illustrates this popular trend. The center hall and front parlors exhibit the finest and best preserved late nineteenth century handcrafted plasterwork in Rockingham and perhaps Richmond County. The builder of the impressive residence, H. C. Watson, was a prominent landholder, cotton gin operator, and respected downtown merchant.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

- B. The H. C. Watson House is associated with the life of Henry Clay Watson, who played a significant role in the commercial development of Rockingham in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Among other accomplishments, he was co-founder of the Watson-King Funeral Home in 1911.
- C. The H. C. Watson House embodies characteristics typical of the popular early twentieth century Classical Revival Style, while at the same time its special design features, found in the decorative, colorful use of slate roof shingles and highly refined interior plasterwork, make the residence architecturally superior in the Rockingham area.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Henry Clay Watson (1854-1926), was one of ten children of John Watson (1812-1878) and Mary Crawford Smith (1815-1891).² He came to Rockingham from Beaver Dam Township in the late 1870s and was hired by downtown merchant, W. C. Thomas, as a clerk. In 1881 H. C. Watson and brother John S. Watson (1846-1899), opened a small store of their own. Henry bought John's interests in the commercial enterprise shortly thereafter.³

The Watson Store, located at the southwest corner of Washington Square, handled groceries, general merchandise, and coffins. In the early 1890s a handsome horse drawn hearse was purchased and Mr. Watson expanded his undertaking business.⁴ In the late 1910s William Walter King, a registered embalmer, became a partner in the Watson and King Company, an undertaking firm incorporated on July 25, 1911.⁵ The business continues to operate in a funeral home built in 1938 at 306 E. Franklin Street.

Not only was H. C. Watson a principal downtown merchant, but he also owned extensive acreage, known locally as Watson Heights, surrounding the Watson estate. The land was farmed primarily in cotton and wheat. In addition, H. C. Watson operated a cotton gin located in the 200 block of Caroline Street. Two warehouses belonging to the former mill complex stand today.⁶

H. C. Watson married Jennie Cole Ellerbe (1861-1939) on August 30, 1883. They had three children.⁷ The estate was given to their daughter Mary Elizabeth Watson (1889-1969) in 1923⁸ and her husband, John D. Chalk (1884-1956) assumed power of attorney in 1926.⁹

John D. Chalk was the principal organizer and first president of the Rockingham Bank and Trust Company which opened January 3, 1944 and changed its name to Richmond County Bank in 1946. Keenly interested in game and fishing sports, John D. Chalk was also made head of the North Carolina State Department of Conservation from 1934 until 1941.¹⁰ One son was born to John D. and Mary Elizabeth Chalk, John D. Chalk, Jr. He assumed power of attorney over the house and property in 1967.¹¹

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Heather M. Hallenberg, interview with John D. Chalk, Jr. November 11, 1980, hereinafter cited as the Chalk Interview, November 11, 1980. Information regarding the plasterwork was related to John D. Chalk by his mother, Mary Elizabeth Chalk. As a child she remembered the craftsman, equipped with small wood molds, creating the plaster embellishments.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Approx. 5 acres

UTM REFERENCES

Lat. 34 55' 57" Long. 79 46' 39"

A	_____	_____	_____	B	_____	_____	_____
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____	_____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All of Tract 11, Parcel 826, Block D, Map 10, Wolfpit Township, consisting of a four sided lot measuring approximately 310' by 700'.

The property being nominated includes the building and the lot on which it stands.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

Footnotes (Continued)

2. The Isaac S. London Papers, located in looseleaf notebooks at the Richmond County Office of the Superior Court, hereinafter cited as the Isaac S. London Papers, Richmond County Courthouse.
3. Isaac S. London Papers, Richmond County Courthouse. John Watson was a partner with W. T. and James Covington in 1875 in the organization of W. T. Covington Co. and was Register of Deeds for Richmond County from 1874 until 1880.
4. Isaac S. London Papers, Richmond County Courthouse.
5. Isaac S. London Papers, Richmond County Courthouse.
6. Chalk Interview, November 11; 1980.
7. Isaac S. London Papers, Richmond County Courthouse.
8. Richmond County Deed Book 164, p. 29.
9. Richmond County Deed Book 168, p. 126.
10. Isaac S. London Papers, Richmond County Courthouse.
11. Richmond County Deed Book 498 p. 122.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Huneycutt, James E. and Ida C., A History of Richmond County (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Company), 1976.

London, Isaac S., The London Papers are found in three separate collections housed at the North Carolina State Archives, the Richmond County Office of the Superior Court, and the Richmond County Library. Only the notes at the State Archives are loosely indexed according to general subject headings. The other two collections are not indexed.

Richmond County Deed Books, Office of the Register of Deeds, Richmond County Courthouse, Rockingham, N. C.

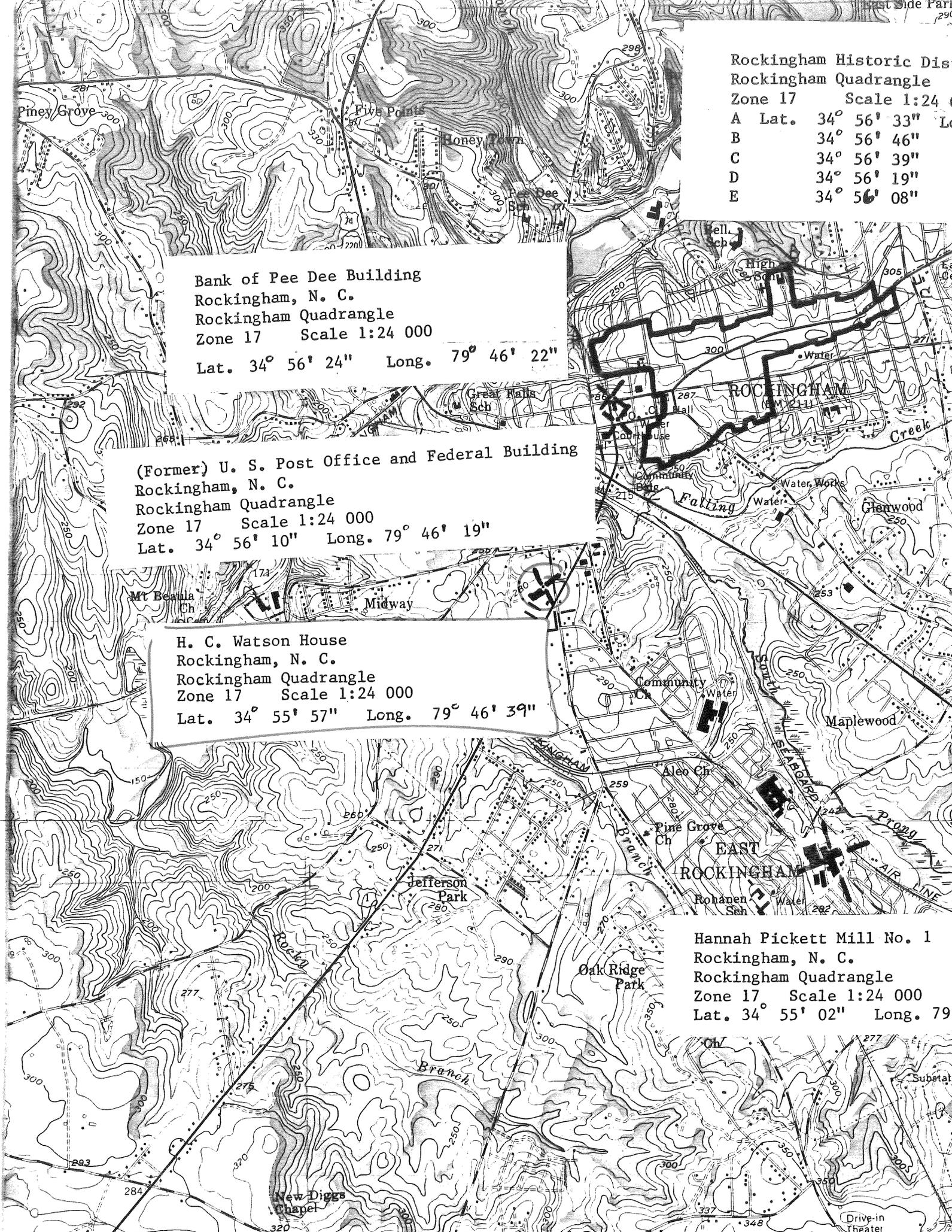
Rockingham Historic Dist
 Rockingham Quadrangle
 Zone 17 Scale 1:24 0
 A Lat. 34° 56' 33" Lo
 B 34° 56' 46"
 C 34° 56' 39"
 D 34° 56' 19"
 E 34° 56' 08"

Bank of Pee Dee Building
 Rockingham, N. C.
 Rockingham Quadrangle
 Zone 17 Scale 1:24 000
 Lat. 34° 56' 24" Long. 79° 46' 22"

(Former) U. S. Post Office and Federal Building
 Rockingham, N. C.
 Rockingham Quadrangle
 Zone 17 Scale 1:24 000
 Lat. 34° 56' 10" Long. 79° 46' 19"

H. C. Watson House
 Rockingham, N. C.
 Rockingham Quadrangle
 Zone 17 Scale 1:24 000
 Lat. 34° 55' 57" Long. 79° 46' 39"

Hannah Pickett Mill No. 1
 Rockingham, N. C.
 Rockingham Quadrangle
 Zone 17 Scale 1:24 000
 Lat. 34° 55' 02" Long. 79°



1897.79

N07-44-37W CITY LIMITS

BALL FIELD

COLE AVENUE

U.S. No 1

H.C. WATSON HOUSE

LOCATION: RICHMOND COUNTY TAX MAPS, WOLF PIT TOWNSHIP, MAP #10, BLOCK D, TRACT II, PARCEL 826

MAP SOURCE: CITY OF ROCKINGHAM, N.C. OFFICIAL MAP, by H&M AERIAL SURVEYS, 1981 SHEET # 31

