

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Nancy Jones House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number S.W. side N.C. 54 opposite jct. with SR 1785 not for publication

city, town Cary vicinity of

state North Carolina code 037 county Wake code 183

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"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<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 Mrs. Audrey Stone

street & number Rt. 1, Box 90

city, town Cary vicinity of state N. C. 27511

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds, Wake County Courthouse

street & number Fayetteville Street Mall

city, town Raleigh state N. C.

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

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## 7. Description

---

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<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

Set among shade trees and surrounded by pasture land, the Nancy Jones House is a fine example of the vernacular Federal style and is one of the few remaining rural sites located on the outskirts of the growing urban center of Cary. The two-story frame house sits on a common bond brick foundation and has two exterior end chimneys, the east one laid in 1:5 bond, the west one in Flemish bond.

Though the hall and parlor plan, originally one room deep, has had several additions through the years and the weatherboarding has been covered with siding, the house still retains many outstanding architectural features. The original portion of the house is essentially intact. It is a characteristic form and plan: a two-story front block one room deep, plus a rear shed with originally an open central porch with stair entry and enclosed flanking rooms. The double front portico is topped by a broken pediment gable roof. Anvil shaped brackets placed atop square posts with molded caps appear at both stories. A railing of square balusters carries around the upper porch. The doors are flanked by 9/9 windows on the lower story and 6/6 on the upper. The same sash treatment occurs throughout the older portion of the house.

The house is entered through a six-panel door leading into the parlor. The interior finish is of consistent well-executed early Federal character. Six panel doors are found throughout the house. Paneled wainscot with molded chair rail carries around the parlor and the original hall to the east. Narrow pine board floors and plastered walls and ceiling are used to finish the two rooms. The two identical mantles are composed of panels surrounded by reeded woodwork and topped with a molded shelf.

From the parlor one reaches the shed room which houses the partially enclosed stair composed of square balusters anchored with a square newel post. It rises back to front along the partition wall, rising through folding doors which serve to close off the upstairs part way up the staircase. The room is finished with wide pine sheathing.

A small room has been added to the west of the stairhall, and an area behind the stair hall, originally a porch, has been finished as a storage area.

Directly behind the hall section shed areas have been converted into a modern den and kitchen. The kitchen is finished with vertical pine sheathing. A screen porch leads off of the kitchen.

The upstairs is laid out in a center hall plan and is finished with wide pine boards and a molded chair rail. One large room and one small room open off of each side of the hall. The large rooms contain mantels very similar to those below. The rooms are sheathed with wide pine boards below the chair rail and plaster above. The small rooms are located in the second story shed addition. One room has been converted into a bath, the other to a storage closet.

No original or early outbuildings survive. A garage and storage shed, both frame and built in the twentieth century, stand to the rear of the house.

# 8. 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention	(folklore)	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** ca. 1803 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Nancy Jones House on Highway 54 west of Cary was the primary stagecoach stop and tavern on the Raleigh-Chapel Hill route in the antebellum period. Built around 1803 for Nathaniel Jones, the structure is a two-story, Federal style building with its original hall-parlor plan with shed rooms, and its well executed Federal finish essentially intact despite some alterations. Henry Jones (1766–1841), who married Nancy Jones (1783–1876) in 1813, received the house and most of his land from his father. The younger Jones was a farmer with a sizable estate of 2,000 acres and upwards of thirty slaves. His widow Nancy operated the stagecoach stop through the Civil War years. By popular legend the Jones House was the site of an 1838 meeting between the governors of North Carolina and South Carolina at which the famous words "It's been a damn long time between drinks" were spoken. This is one of the most popularly told tales of North Carolina's political folklore and has long been associated with this house. In 1847 President James K. Polk and his entourage stopped by the house en route to Chapel Hill.

Criteria Assessment:

- A. Associated with development of plantation economy in Wake County in post-Revolutionary era.
- B. Associated by apparently reliable legend with a famous remark in North Carolina folklore.
- C. Embodies distinctive characteristics of vernacular Federal style domestic architecture: the two-story, hall-parlor plan house with rear shed rooms and enclosed stair rising from a central rear porch is an important vernacular form; the Federal finish is intact and very well executed.

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The Nancy Jones House is located just west of Cary in Wake County on a sixteen-acre tract between the railroad and Highway 54. The house is believed to have been built around 1803 by Nathaniel Jones, father-in-law of Nancy Jones. The structure is a white, two-story, frame Federal-style building with exterior end chimneys and two-story porch. With the exception of some rear rooms and one side room, the house is essentially unaltered since its construction. Though the house is today situated on a relatively small piece of property, it was in antebellum times part of a 2,000-acre estate owned by Henry Jones. He and his wife Nancy operated a stagecoach stop and tavern out of their house during those years. It is stemming from this fact, as well as the fact that a string of notables were served there, that the house derives its primary historical significance.

In the early days of Wake County there were at least four men by the name of Nathaniel Jones. In order to differentiate between them in the public records they adopted the habit of appending to their name the initials of their place of residence. Nathaniel Jones of Crabtree (C.T.) and Nathaniel Jones of White Plains (W.P.) were the two most prominent of the four Joneses, both of them playing important roles in local government in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The former, who died in 1810, was one of three men selected to choose a site for the meeting of the legislature in 1795. The latter, who died in 1815, was among the many Wake citizens who offered their land as a potential site of the county courthouse. Nathaniel Jones (W.P.) served as chairman of the county court for several years.<sup>1</sup> Both were large landowners with as many as seventeen slaves each in 1790.<sup>2</sup> With a marriage in 1813 these two important families were brought together. On February 3 of that year, Henry Jones (1766-1841), son of Nathaniel Jones (C.T.), and Nancy Ann Jones (1783-1876), daughter of Nathaniel Jones (W.P.), were wed.<sup>3</sup> By several published accounts as well as a strong local tradition, Nathaniel Jones (C.T.) was responsible for building the present Jones House around 1803. Yet it seems reasonable to conclude that his son Henry, then approaching forty years of age, may himself have been responsible for the construction.

Henry Jones was primarily a farmer. During his later years his house became a stagecoach stop but he apparently left its operation, as well as other household duties, to his wife. Jones began acquiring land in 1797, when he received a grant for 236 acres on White Oak and Crabtree Creeks.<sup>4</sup> As late as 1809 he was taxed on that single tract. However, in the following year, he was taxed on a total of 1,987 acres. He received the tract on Crabtree Creek plus the place "whereon he live[d]" by terms of the will of his father Nathaniel in 1810.<sup>5</sup> Henry Jones kept a 2,000-acre estate for the rest of his life. The ninety-six-acre home tract, with "necessary out houses," probably included sheds, a barn, and slave quarters. (The present owner of the house maintains that a slavehouse once was located near where the railroad tracks now run.) Jones had seven slaves in 1809, a number which increased to thirteen the next year and swelled to thirty-two by 1830.<sup>6</sup> Little direct information is available on Jones's farming activities. As indicated by his estate records, Jones kept sizable herds of livestock. Thus his plantings certainly included corn; wheat and possibly tobacco were also grown. The number of slaves kept by Jones indicates that he may have cultivated several hundred of his 2,000 acres.

In August 1841 Henry Jones died intestate at the age of seventy-five. By the terms of the settlement of his estate his wife Nancy received the home tract plus 434 additional acres and one year's allowance of food and other goods. Jones's five children--Adolphus, Rufus, Sidney, Eliza, and Amelia--received the remaining property, notably tracts of 235 acres each on Crabtree Creek.<sup>7</sup>

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Nancy Jones outlived her husband by thirty-five years. For all but her last years she continued to live in the house and operate the tavern/stagecoach stop. "Jones" and "Jones Ordinary" appear on area maps as early as Nathaniel Jones's day in 1808. Until the establishment of Cary (founded in 1863 and incorporated in 1871) the area was widely known as the Jones community.<sup>8</sup> Situated on the main stage road midway between Raleigh and Chapel Hill, Mrs. Jones's house was a popular stopping place. However, she did not offer overnight accommodations; usually only the midday meal was served. Although brandy was kept for the travelers Nancy Jones forbade her husband and later her three sons to drink. Being the only large white house in the area, Jones's was a landmark for miles around. It was said to be the only fit place for important visitors to stop on the Raleigh-Chapel Hill route.<sup>9</sup> In that regard several incidents connected with the house's days as a stagecoach stop are deserving of mention.

The first of these has become as much the province of legend as of fact. Yet the latest examination of the historical and literary evidence indicates that the legend has its roots in an actual event that took place at the Jones House. In 1838, as the story goes, Governor Edward Dudley of North Carolina and Governor Pierce Mason Butler of South Carolina happened by the Jones House. They quickly consumed their first servings of apple and peach brandy. While waiting for their next round, Governor Dudley commented to Governor Butler, "It's been a damn long time between drinks!" Overhearing what he had said, Laney, the black servant, was shocked that such language had been used in the house. Apprised of his comment Nancy Jones was said to be shocked by the affront to her hospitality. Thus the story was hushed up, though passed down within the family for many years. The mahogany table over which the exchange allegedly took place is today owned by Amelia McClenaghan of Raleigh, a family descendant. In 1923 a Raleigh reporter interviewed a grandson of Nancy Jones, who revealed the details of the story and maintained that it was truthful in all respects.<sup>10</sup> The words, which have become part of American folklore (particularly of drinking and barroom lore) have also been attributed to North Carolina governors Jonathan Worth and John Motley Morehead. However, on the basis of an examination of all the evidence, the leading authority on North Carolina legends and humor concluded that "for the last half century the Nancy Jones version has evinced such persistence that it is the one most generally accepted."<sup>11</sup>

The fact of two other visits to the house, each more easily verified, confirms the house's importance as a stagecoach stop on the Raleigh-Chapel Hill route. In 1847 James K. Polk returned to North Carolina for his only visit to his native state as the incumbent president. The point of his trip was to deliver the commencement address at the University of North Carolina, his alma mater. On May 31, he and his entourage, "making quite a long train of carriages," left Raleigh at 9 A.M. They took their noon-time meal at the Jones House and did not arrive in Chapel Hill until 6 P.M. Polk wrote in his diary: "We stopped half an hour at Mrs. Jones ten miles on the way, where we were overtaken by Ex-Governor [John Motley] Morehead, Governor [William Alexander] Graham and others."<sup>12</sup> Ex-Governor John Branch was also in Polk's party. It seems likely that, on one occasion or another, practically all of the state's governors in the mid-nineteenth century stopped at the Jones House.

Visitors of a different stripe altogether descended on the house in April 1865. In the closing days of the Civil War, troops under the overall command of General William Tecumseh Sherman occupied Raleigh and outlying areas of Wake County. During their time there Sherman received word of Lincoln's assassination and sought to gauge

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the effect it would have on his men. On April 17 he recorded that "on our way back to Raleigh in the cars I showed the same dispatch [announcing Lincoln's death] to General Logan and to several of the officers of the Fifteenth Corps that were posted at Morrisville and Jones's Station, all of whom were deeply impressed by it. . . ."13 Although Sherman's reference was to a train station near Jones's, it seems safe to assume that the troops would not have passed up the opportunity to drop in on Nancy Jones.

In 1852 the widow Jones had sold right-of-way across her property to the North Carolina Railroad. The tracks were in place by 1854, thereby placing the Jones House between the highway and the railroad.14 Although it is unclear when she moved away and therefore ceased operation of the stagecoach stop, it is understood that Nancy Jones spent her last years with her daughter Amelia and son-in-law Wilson Whitaker just outside Raleigh.15 She died in 1876 at the age of ninety-three. By the terms of her will she left all personal property, including a bed, tools, and kitchen ware, to John L. Atkins, husband of her other daughter Eliza. She left all real estate, including the house, to her son Adolphus.16 According to one report Adolphus Jones (1823-1910) operated a school in the house during the postwar years.17 Shortly after his mother's death Jones moved to Cary and in 1878 sold the house to S. R. Horne.18 With its incorporation in 1871 Cary began to replace Jones on maps. Today Cary has expanded to the point that its city limits extend to within one-quarter mile of the Jones House.

The house passed through a series of owners in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Among these were Russell O. Heater, a locally prominent businessman (owner of a well-digging company) and civic leader later known as "Mr. Cary," and Henry Adams, owner of a Cary appliance company and also a civic and political leader.19 In 1935 Thomas Robert and Audrey Mary Stone bought the house and sixteen acres from Adams.20 The couple, who moved to the area from the Nelson community in southern Durham County, operated a barbecue restaurant in Cary. When they bought it the house was structurally in much the same condition as it remains today. Rooms in the rear of the house, including a kitchen, had been added around the turn of the century. A sun room with windows on all sides had been added to the side of the house (the Stones soon enclosed the windows). A windmill which stood behind the house blew down during the early 1940s. Mrs. Stone recalls that her husband gave the metal in the windmill to the government which was at that time (during World War II) appealing for scrap metal. T. R. Stone died in 1945. His widow Audrey left the restaurant business after his death.21

Periodically recognition has been given to the historical importance of the house. Several articles about the building and the legend associated with it have appeared in a North Carolina magazine and in local papers. During the Depression years workers with the Federal Writers' Project documented the historical associations of the house. More recently, during Cary's centennial celebration in 1971, over 400 people visited the house.22

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NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Elizabeth Reid Murray, Wake: Capital County of North Carolina, Volume I: Prehistory through Centennial (Raleigh: Capital County Publishing Co., 1983), 79, 83. White Plains, the home of the father of Nancy Jones, stood in the Cary area until the 1950s (p. 163).

<sup>2</sup>Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1790: North Carolina (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1973), 105.

<sup>3</sup>Wake County Marriage Bonds, North Carolina State Archives.

<sup>4</sup>Wake County Deed Book K, p. 133.

<sup>5</sup>Wake County Tax Records, North Carolina State Archives; Wake County Deed Book 9, p. 181.

<sup>6</sup>Wake County Tax Records, North Carolina State Archives; Fifth Census, 1830, Population Schedule.

<sup>7</sup>Wake County Estates Records, Henry Jones folder, North Carolina State Archives.

<sup>8</sup>W. P. Cumming, North Carolina in Maps (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1966); William S. Powell, The North Carolina Gazetteer (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 91. Note particularly the Price-Strother (1808), MacRae-Brazier (1833), and U.S. Coast Survey (1865) maps.

<sup>9</sup>News and Observer, 15 July 1923; The State, 15 April 1971, pp. 7-8. Another retelling of the story is in Blackwell Robinson (ed.), The North Carolina Guide (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1955), 470-471.

<sup>10</sup>Interview with Amelia McClenaghan (by telephone), 12 July 1983; News and Observer, 15 July 1923. Ben Dixon McNeill spoke to Joel D. Whitaker, age seventy-one, who had spent much of his boyhood at his grandmother's house. In accepting Whitaker's story, McNeill disputed doubters such as Colonel Fred Olds. "The fact that there are no documents before which the document-worshippers may prostrate themselves is neither here nor there," MacNeill wrote.

<sup>11</sup>Richard Walser, "Damn Long Time Between Drinks," North Carolina Historical Review, LIX, 2 (April 1982), 171.

<sup>12</sup>Milo Milton Quaife (ed.), The Diary of James K. Polk During His Presidency, 1845-1849 (Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Co., 1910), III, 44.

<sup>13</sup>William Tecumsch Sherman, Memoirs of General William T. Sherman by Himself (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1957; originally published, 1875), II, 350.

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<sup>14</sup>Wake County Deed Book 19, p. 522.

<sup>15</sup>McClenaghan interview, 12 July 1983.

<sup>16</sup>Wake County Will Book B, p. 572.

<sup>17</sup>The State, 15 April 1971. According to the magazine article Walter Hines Page (1855-1918), future journalist and diplomat and Cary's most famous native son, studied at Adolphus Jones's school as a boy. Yet Page's biographer states only that he was tutored by a family member up to his enrollment at the Bingham School in Orange County in 1868. John Milton Cooper, Jr., Walter Hines Page: The Southerner as American, 1855-1918 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 9-10.

<sup>18</sup>Wake County Deed Book 91, p. 330.

<sup>19</sup>News and Observer, 18 April 1971, and Cary News, 5 May 1971.

<sup>20</sup>Wake County Deed Book 687, p. 420.

<sup>21</sup>Interview with Audrey Stone (by telephone), 10 August 1983.

<sup>22</sup>Interview with Audrey Stone (by telephone), 10 August 1983.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation sheets

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 16 acres

Quadrangle name Cary

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A	1 7	6 9 8 4 7 0	3 9 6 3 8 6 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	1 7	6 9 8 8 0 5	3 9 6 3 6 1 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	1 7	6 9 8 7 1 0	
	Zone	Easting	Northing

D	1 7	6 9 8 3 2 0	3 9 6 3 5 8 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

E			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

F			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

G			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

H			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

**Verbal boundary description and justification** The property being nominated is parcel 36 shown on page 488 of Wake County Tax maps, Volume 2, 1982. See attached map.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
-------	-----	------	--------	-----	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

# 11. Form Prepared By

Description by Jo Ann Williford, Survey Specialist, Historical Significance by name/title Michael Hill, Researcher.

organization Division of Archives and History date September 21, 1983

street & number 109 E. Jones Street telephone 733-6545

city or town Raleigh state N. C.

# 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature William S. Price

title State Historic Preservation Officer date October 20, 1983

### For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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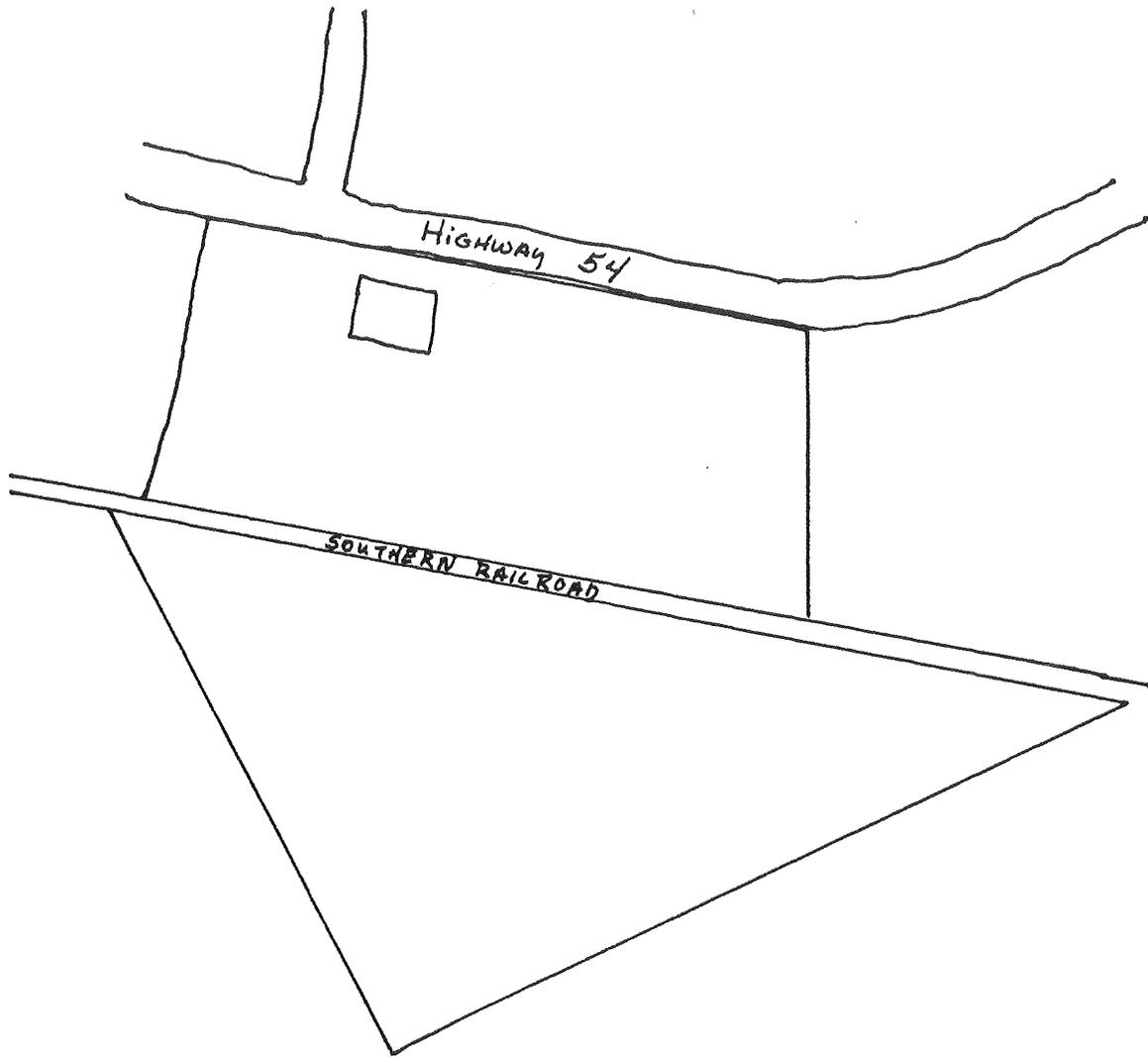
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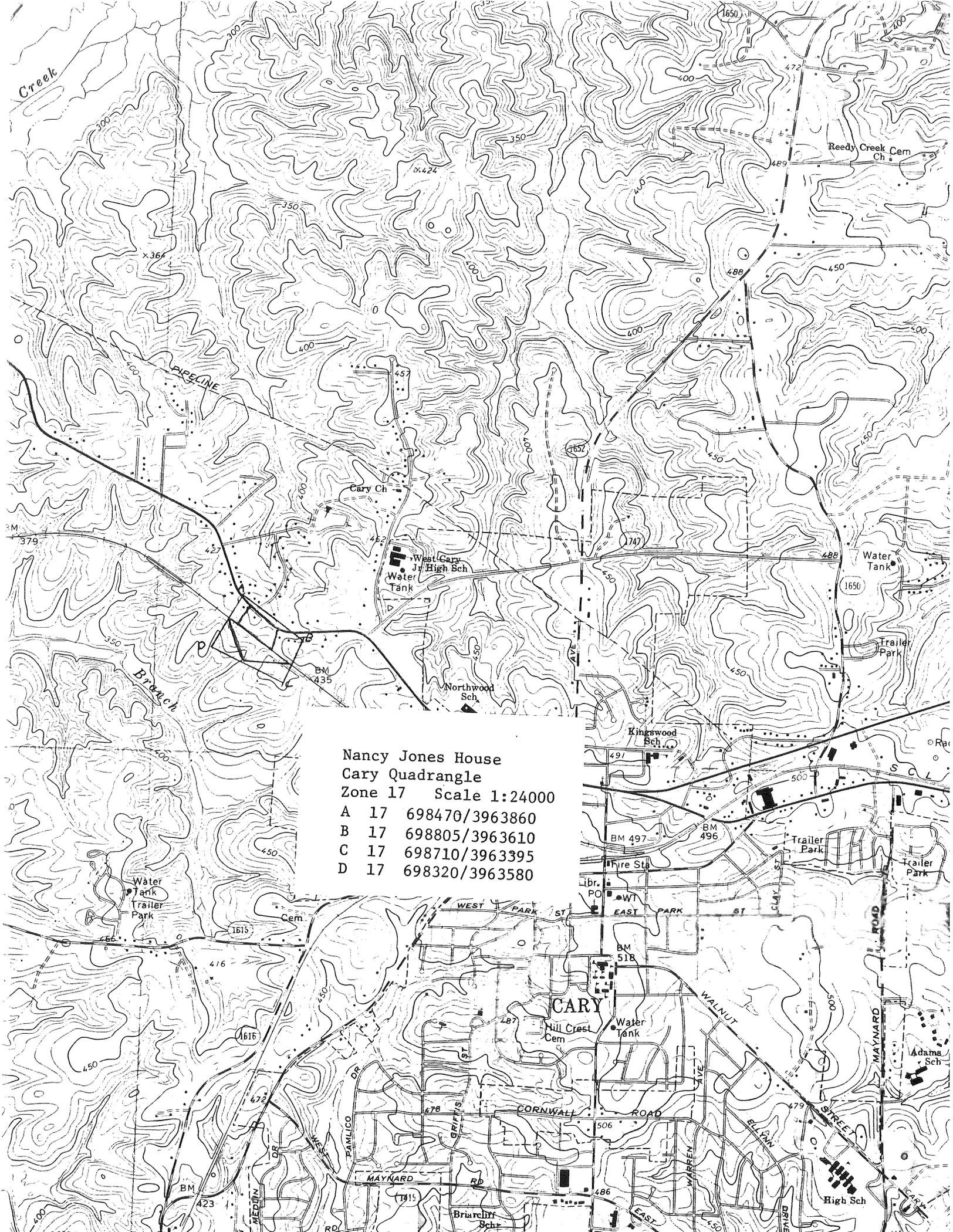
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Nancy Jones House  
Wake County Tax maps  
Vol. 2 1982  
Pg. 488 parcel 36

1" = 200'

↑ N



Nancy Jones House  
Cary Quadrangle  
Zone 17 Scale 1:24000  
A 17 698470/3963860  
B 17 698805/3963610  
C 17 698710/3963395  
D 17 698320/3963580

