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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC **The Solomon and Henry Weil Houses**

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER **204 and 200 West Chestnut Street**

CITY, TOWN

**Goldsboro**

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

**3rd**

STATE

**North Carolina**

CODE  
**37**

COUNTY  
**Wayne**

CODE  
**191**

\_\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

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

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

**Solomon Weil House:  
Ben Strickland, Mayor  
City of Goldsboro**

**Henry Weil House:  
The Wayne Foundation  
Abram Weil**

STREET & NUMBER

**Box A  
Goldsboro, NC 27530**

**710 North Lionel Street  
Goldsboro, NC 27530**

CITY, TOWN

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

**Wayne County Courthouse**

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

**Goldsboro**

STATE  
**North Carolina 27530**

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

\_\_\_ FEDERAL \_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

On September 15, 1874, Henry Weil wrote to his fiancée, Mina Rosenthal, in Wilson, North Carolina:

Solomon has been studying his plan for several days. I think the plan is a very good one, and if the architect does justice in making a good elevation, the house, as it is arranged, I think, will suit us also; and in this case, it will save us considerable trouble. . . ."

This letter was the initiation for the building of the twin houses in the 200 block of West Chestnut Street by the Weil brothers, Solomon and Henry. Set in a landscaped park which occupies just over a third of a city block, the Solomon and Henry Weil Houses were when they were constructed in 1875 located in the most fashionable residential district of Reconstruction era Goldsboro, northwest of Center Street, the main artery of the business district. Today the immediate surrounding area of the houses has lost its residential aspect, but the Weil Houses--because of the identical and complementing design, and the now mature landscape of their contiguous lawn--retain their dignity.

The twin houses (the Henry Weil House on the left, the Solomon Weil House on the right) have almost identical northeast (front) elevations. The plans of the houses are also nearly identical: each follows a center-hall plan with the entrance/stair hall extending the depth of the house. The hall is flanked on each side by a row of three rooms. On both houses the right (northwest) row projects some ten feet in front of the plane of the elevation, as a gable-roof ell. The overall plan of each house is basically a rectangle the outline of which is either filled in or extended by projecting bays, bay windows, porches, and verandas. Set on brick foundations, the houses stand two stories high with an attic and are covered by weatherboards. Their roofs of intersecting gables are pierced by interior chimneys which are embellished with banded brickwork and crenellated caps. The eaves which return on the gable ends protect friezes formed of molded panels set between richly scrolled brackets. A molded cornice with dentils carries along the edge of the eaves. The ornamental sawn and turned woodwork which decorates the porches, verandas, bay windows, door and window surrounds, and the eaves of the gables is eclectic in derivation and composition and is similarly disposed on each house.

Each ell is fronted by a one-story bay window having a pair of arched four-over-four sash windows on the front of the bay and two-over-two sash on the sides of the bay. The chamfered surrounds, which rest on paneled bases, support a frieze below eaves like those of the house only reduced in scale. A double window of four-over-four sash occupies the second story of this projecting bay, and a semicircular window set in a molded surround is placed in the gable front to illuminate the attic.

Four-over-four arch-headed sash windows are used throughout the houses and are set in plain surrounds surmounted by a heavy, molded hood. The other three bays of the elevation are marked by a one-story veranda which protects the double-door entrance in the bay next to the projecting bay. The veranda which turns the corner and continues down the full southeast elevation and terminates at the pantry on the south corner of the house. Its posts are square-in-section, chamfered, and are topped by impost blocks

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carrying the frieze. The frieze and eaves, like those of the bay window, are scaled versions of those of the house. The posts rest on short, paneled piers which are connected by a balustrade of robust turned balusters between molded rails. This balustrade is also used at each end of the steps rising up to the porches. This entire treatment is common to all the porches and verandas on both houses. On the Henry Weil House the porch terminates at the east corner of the front elevation. On the southeast side a bay window is set in the eastern-most bay of the elevation and a veranda shelters the other six bays of this elevation which faces James Street. A one-story veranda carries along the northwest elevation of the Henry Weil House which is parallel to the southeast elevation of the Solomon Weil House. In the great lawn between these elevations are planted four magnolias in symmetrical disposition which complemented a fountain (now lost) in the center of the lawn. The same architectural elements--molded arched surrounds and bracketed eaves--are continued on the less important northwest elevation of the Solomon Weil House which faced the side of the Arnold Borden House (now gone) and the rear elevations of both houses. The important variations in the external appearance of the houses are the one-story wing attached to the west corner of the Solomon Weil House and the raising of the one-story southeast elevation of the Henry Weil House to a full two stories. (The overall floor space of the two houses is nearly equal.)

As noted earlier the floor plans of the houses are very similar, and not surprisingly, the single decorative motives and schemes are similarly executed in both houses. Like the exterior ornament, the molded, carved, and turned interior ornament is derived from several architectural periods and combined in an eclectic manner. The baseboards, door and window surrounds are heavily molded, and the four-panel doors are also molded.

The original fabric of the interiors remains little changed despite the additions of later years. Around the turn of the century the major additions and alterations were effected; these included the laying of parquet floors over the original pine flooring in the first-story halls and rooms of both houses, the two-story additions made to the center of the northwest elevation of both structures to house bathroom facilities for both stories, and the removal of the master bedrooms in both houses to the second floor at which time the former master bedrooms became a second parlor. Arched openings were installed between the original parlor and this new parlor thereby making them communicating rooms, or double parlors. Also about this time several Colonial Revival mantels were installed in the Solomon Weil House. In 1929, after Mrs. Solomon Weil's death in 1928, the Solomon Weil House was given to Wayne County for use as a public library. Some changes were effected to adapt the house to this new use which included the removal of walls to provide a large reading room and stack space.

As the Solomon Weil House was the original of the two, it will be first in order of discussion. The Henry Weil House will be discussed only as it differs. Both houses feature an entrance/stair hall with an open-string stair ascending along the left side in a long run, with a short curved flight to the second story. Both the newel and the balusters set below a shaped handrail are turned.

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At the Solomon Weil House, a wide opening gives into the parlor which has the most elaborate decorative scheme of either house. An Adamesque treatment, incorporating rocaille ornament in Neo-Classical framework, is executed on the mantel and overmantel, on the wide frieze and cornice around the room and on the ceiling both around the perimeter and as a centerpiece. Arched openings on each side of the fireplace on the southwest wall open into a second parlor (the original master bedroom) which retains its original simple slate mantel. Here the fireplace, like most of those throughout the houses, is fitted with a decorated cast iron coal grate and cover. A tray ceiling is formed of reeded members whose joints are decorated with bosses. The wall between this room and the original living room behind it was removed to provide stack space for the library in 1929. It does, however, retain its Colonial Revival mantel which is composed of unfluted columns supporting a wide shelf. A small bedroom and connecting bathroom are set at the west corner of the house.

The first room on the left of the hall is the original library. It retains its marbled slate mantel. The dining room, the second room on the left, is entered through a wide archway at the back of the hall whose ceiling is curved to follow the curve of the archway and the curve of the stair. Three tall French doors on the southwest side of the dining room lead to the veranda overlooking the shared lawn. The ribbon-bordered parquet floor here is the most elaborate in the house. The wall separating the dining room and the winter kitchen was removed in 1929 to provide a larger reading room for the public library. The detached summer kitchens have been lost.

On the second floor the center hall plan remains intact. The woodwork, somewhat less elaborate than that on the first story, is nevertheless notable; the three-part molded surrounds and high baseboards are continued. The plan provides two bedrooms on the northwest side of the hall and one on the southeast side (or right). The southeast bedroom has a marbled slate mantel--a stock design which was installed in both houses in several rooms. Its high walnut overmantel is one of the few which survive. It has a vaguely Eastlake, cum Egyptian, scheme of carved ornament. The communicating bedrooms on the northwest side of the hall have their individual bathrooms which have a high wainscot (one short panel above one long panel) below a molded chair rail. Both original sinks with marble tops and back splashes, a cast-iron bath tub, and a water closet--all original fixtures--survive.

At the Henry Weil House, the first-floor plan with three rooms on each side of the center hall is a near duplicate of the Solomon Weil House. The woodwork is also duplicated. The hall floor is laid in a lattice-like pattern of interlocking ceramic tiles instead of wood parquet. The first room on the right of the hall was the parlor with, as originally at the Solomon Weil House, the master bedroom behind it. In the twentieth century the rooms were made communicating when an archway replaced closets to the right of the fireplace. The third room on the northwest side of the hall was used as a nursery. In an addition to the northwest side of the house are a closet and bathroom which were shared with the master bedroom. On the southeast side of the hall, the first

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room is the library which contains its very good marbled and gilt mantel and coal grate. The adjoining dining room has a wide Greek key border in the parquet floor. The chandelier here originally hung in the Solomon Weil House. The kitchen with a large pantry fitted with drawers and shelves remains as built.

When built, the second floor of this house was an exact duplicate of the Solomon Weil House. In the early twentieth century two bedrooms, each with an individual bath, were added behind the southeast bedroom and above the dining room and kitchen. These have neo-Greek Revival details--symmetrical moldings with corner blocks. The mantels are typical Colonial Revival examples. The bathrooms are more unusual. The water closet, the sinks with their marble tops and back splashes, and the bathtubs retain their silver plated fittings. The floor are laid in small hexagonal tiles. The walls have glazed white rectangular tiles with an Adamesque frieze around the top. And, as at the Solomon Weil House, bathrooms were provided for the bedrooms along the northwest side of the hall.

Mechanically, the houses were very advanced for Goldsboro. Both had running water in the house, and they were said to be the first houses in town to have gas lights instead of the kerosene lights used by the other households. The gas chandeliers and other fixtures were adapted for electricity and many remain in place. Others are stored in the attics.

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1874-1875

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Solomon Weil House and the Henry Weil House, twin houses built in 1875, are among the most important landmarks of Goldsboro, not only as handsome, well-preserved examples of Victorian architecture but also because of the major role the Weil family played in the history of Goldsboro and North Carolina. Henry, Solomon, and Herman Weil came to Goldsboro in the 1860s and became part of a Jewish community which had been important to the city since its incorporation in 1847. By the 1870s the Weil brothers had become successful businessmen, and soon were involved in a variety of successful financial and industrial ventures. They contributed strongly to the cultural and educational life of the town, and their wives, Mina and Sara, were also involved in public and philanthropic activities. Gertrude Weil, daughter of Henry and Mina, played an active role in the women's suffrage movement in the 1920s and in a wide variety of progressive causes until her death in 1971.

In the 1860s Herman, Solomon, and Henry Weil came to Goldsboro from Baltimore after having migrated to the Maryland city from Germany. Like many thousands of German Jews who emigrated to the United States at that time, the Weil brothers came seeking a better way of life. According to one authority on the Weil family, "they had run from prejudice, poverty, and post-revolutionary reaction in the German states." They eventually occupied a prominent place in the history of Goldsboro, especially in the Jewish community which had been a vital part of Goldsboro's population since its incorporation in 1847. For the Weils their journey proved to be a success story--a story of their growth from itinerant peddlers to prosperous merchants and "department store pioneers" in Goldsboro.

The Weil brothers were among five children of Jacob and Yetta Weil, who had emigrated to Baltimore after their children had come there in the mid-nineteenth century. Herman Weil came to Goldsboro from Baltimore in 1858 as a peddler and went to work as a clerk for Henry Oettinger who ran a store on Center Street. At the outbreak of the Civil War he entered the Confederate Army, but remained in the army only a short time, being present or accounted for through December, 1861. In 1865 Herman was joined in Goldsboro by his brother, Henry, who had arrived in Baltimore in 1860. They went into business for themselves in June, 1865, only two months after General Sherman had passed through Goldsboro. They established a store in the small wooden building that had housed the store of Henry Oettinger.

In 1866 Herman and Henry were joined by their brother, Solomon, age 17. Despite the difficulties of Reconstruction, the Weil brothers proved to be in the right place at the right time, for their store on Center Street was located directly across from the tracks of the Wilmington and Weldon (later Atlantic Coast Line) Railroad. The

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arrival of this railway line and the North Carolina Railroad in the 1850s resulted in the Wayne County town becoming a vital trade center, which gained the name, "gateway to Eastern North Carolina." The strategically located "H. Weil & Bros." firm was a success from the start, selling its products to farmers and sharecroppers in the Goldsboro area and to Union soldiers stationed in the town. The owners also frequently traded in cotton, one of Goldsboro's chief commodities.<sup>3</sup> Their "general store" was a "type that was very common in the rural South of that day." According to a newspaper advertisement in 1885 the Weils offered a multitude of dry goods, clothing, household items, and "notions of every description. We can only say," declared the ad, "that our assortment is complete in all its branches." The volume of sales for the business grew from \$30,000 the first year, to \$100,000 in 1875, to \$400,000 in 1890; it reached the million dollar mark at the turn of the century.<sup>4</sup>

The brothers also traded and speculated in real estate, and in January 1869, they jointly bought from William and Marie Richardson of Orange County a plot of land in the 200 block of West Chestnut Street (where they would later build residences). Their business had been so prosperous that in 1870 they also bought a lot adjoining the store and erected a new two-story brick building on the site of the original wooden structure. The brick for the new building came from their own kilns on the Neuse River, another of their post-war ventures.<sup>5</sup>

By the 1870s, the prospering brothers were thinking of marriage and establishing homes. In July, 1874, Henry Weil wrote to his fiancée, Mina Rosenthal of Wilson, that he had been looking in Raleigh at "various homes that have lately been built. I wanted to look for one," he explained, "such as I might fancy for a dwelling house. We have seen but one that suited. This one I admired very much and I think you would like it also. I shall try to get the plan and elevation from the architect and bring it along some time soon." Two days later he wrote to her that his search in Raleigh had given him "a better idea of a house [than he] ever had before, a house of comfort." After Henry began work on his own "house of comfort" he wrote to Mina in October describing the builders progress on Solomon's house which followed the same design. "We have had our hands full for the last few days," he declared, "as Solomon has to do considerable in getting everything ready for his house. Since Father came he had to make an addition to it, namely a cellar, which my father says is more important than a parlor."<sup>6</sup>

No documentation has been found concerning the architect of the Raleigh houses the Weils admired nor of the houses they built. Some circumstantial evidence, however, suggests the possibility of G. S. Appleget. A native of New Jersey, Appleget was in North Carolina by 1869, and in that year designed a grand Second Empire town house in Raleigh for J. M. Heck; he is believed to have designed the Andrews House and to have done several other (unknown) Raleigh buildings as well. By the spring of 1875, Appleget had moved to Charlotte, where he advertised his work in the May 26 Daily Charlotte Observer as including "all the best buildings, with only a few exceptions in Raleigh, Goldsboro, and Greensboro. . . ." The similarities between the Heck and Andrews houses and the

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Weil houses are not conclusive, and none of Applegat's other houses are known. The question remains tantalizingly unanswered.

In the next month a fire destroyed Solomon Weil's house, and Henry described the incident to his fiancée:

Solomon thought at once it was his house, in which he was not mistaken. When we hurried over to the building, we saw that the flames issued in full force through the windows of the second story. I knew it was utterly impossible to save anything, and we watched how beautiful the flames ascended. We could do nothing else. The house is insured for \$4,500, which is about \$500 less than the building cost so far. Therefore our loss is comparatively trifling.

As a result of the fire the Weil brothers bought more land in April from the adjacent lot belonging to E. B. Borden in order "to widen the space between the homes" before rebuilding the house of Solomon Weil.

In March, 1875, Henry Weil married Mina Rosenthal and in May Solomon married Sarah Einstein of Boston. The couples moved in September into two nearly identical Victorian mansions on their West Chestnut Street property. Prior to the move, Henry went shopping for furnishings in New York. "Undoubtedly" he wrote to Mina,

I bought some things that perhaps won't suit you or Sara exactly, but I think all the patterns are pretty. For the parlor I bought velvet capets; for our sitting room the angel pattern; for Sarah a very light grey ground with very pretty flowers and leaves on it. The bedroom and bath are in grey ground and red flower small pattern. Sarah same, but different pattern. Library green and grey. Sarah red and grey, same pattern as ours... All our carpets are Brussels. 11

The editor of the Goldsboro News-Argus once described the Weil mansions as "palatial." According to the biographer of the Weil family,

Of Victorian style and identical design, the homes had inside chimneys, slate mantels and hard pine floors, later covered over with parquet downstairs. Each house had eight large rooms, including parlor and sitting room, and a bath. Sol Weil added a downstairs room and extra bath. An upstairs room in the Henry Weil home was used for a billiard room. The Sol Weil home had an upstairs card room. Both homes had outside kitchens that were used in the summer months.

Each house hold had several servants, and a yardman served both homes. The Henry Weils had a cook, housemaid, nurse, and a "mother's helper."

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The homes sat in a grove of four magnolia trees and had a contiguous lawn, with a fountain in the middle. An arbor of Concord grape vines ran between the two houses at the rear. There was a large backyard space, where neighborhood children gathered to play, and back of that a vegetable garden for each home, where geese and ducks were kept.

Sara and Mina entertained many guests in their homes, especially Jewish visitors. Sara generally gave more lavish and exotic parties than Mina, who preferred to give small dinner parties of not more than a dozen guests. Among the prominent people who frequently visited the Solomon Weil home was Simon Wolf, a Washington author and U. S. Consul to Egypt. In 1888, while campaigning for governor,<sup>12</sup> Democratic candidate Daniel G. Fowle spoke from a platform erected on the Weil lawn.

Herman Weil died in 1878, but his brothers continued to run their successful businesses and to play a prominent role in the establishment of several new firms in Goldsboro. In 1888 Henry Weil joined with two other town residents and incorporated the Goldsboro Ice Company, the town's first manufacturer of ice. The Weils later owned the entire operation. In the 1890s Henry and Solomon also ran a coal company and they united with M. L. Lee and F. K. Borden of Goldsboro in establishing the Carolina Rice Mills, later taken over entirely by the Weil family. The two brothers were also incorporators of most of the other Goldsboro business firms that sprang up in the 1880s and 1890s, including the Goldsboro Oil Company, Pioneer Tobacco Company, Wayne Agricultural Works, Goldsboro Savings Bank, and Goldsboro Storage and Warehouse Company.<sup>13</sup>

Besides their financial achievements Henry and Solomon Weil rendered significant political and civic service to their community and state. In 1890 they presented to the Town of Goldsboro a large tract of land to be used as a public park, stipulating it be named for their deceased brother, Herman. A strong advocate of public education, Henry served on the board of trustees of the Goldsboro Graded Schools for over thirty years. He was a member of the board of trustees of the University of North Carolina, and made financial contributions to the institution. Solomon Weil served on the Goldsboro Board of Alderman from 1881 to 1905, urging progressive changes in Goldsboro's government and public facilities. In 1909 in order to celebrate his sixtieth birthday, he donated \$5,000 to the Goldsboro Hospital Association toward building a new Goldsboro hospital to replace a dilapidated facility.<sup>14</sup>

Henry and Solomon Weil died within a month of each other in 1914. The following year the Weil family gave an endowment to the University of North Carolina, to found the Weil Lectures on American Citizenship at the university. In accordance with the terms of their wills, Henry's wife, Mina, and Solomon's wife, Sara, became the owners of the two Chestnut Street mansions.<sup>15</sup>

Sara and Mina were as active in public and philanthropic affairs as their husbands. Sara, particularly interested in charitable causes, organized the Ladies Benevolent

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Society, established a Woman's Club library which grew into the Goldsboro Public Library, and founded the North Carolina Association of Jewish Women.

Mina Weil was even more active than her sister-in-law. Well known in Goldsboro and North Carolina for charity work, she has been described as the "forerunner of the modern case worker" in the state. A member of the Ladies Benevolent Society and the Bureau of Social Service, she served during World War I as chairman of the Red Cross Civilian Relief Committee and set up an office in the living room of her house to aid families of service men. She also worked for the enactment of child labor legislation. At her husband's death, she was appointed to his place on the board of trustees of Goldsboro Graded Schools.<sup>16</sup>

Sara Weil died in 1929, willing all her real estate, which included the dwelling at 204 Chestnut Street, to her children, Edna Weil Oettinger and Lionel Weil of Goldsboro, and Helene Weil Strauss of Cleveland, Ohio. In that same year these heirs conveyed the mansion property to the City of Goldsboro for the consideration of \$5 with the stipulation that the building was to be used as a public library. If the house was used for any other purpose it would revert back to the Weil heirs. It is still being used as Goldsboro's public library.<sup>17</sup>

In January, 1928, Mina Weil deeded her house and lot at 200 West Chestnut Street to her daughter Gertrude.<sup>18</sup> She continued to live there with her daughter until her death in 1940.

Gertrude Weil, daughter of Henry and Mina, born in 1879, graduated from Smith College in 1901, and after traveling in the United States and abroad, settled in Goldsboro with her parents. Here she continued the family interest in social, civic, and humanitarian projects. Although modest and unassuming, she is well remembered for her reform-minded zeal and her progressive efforts particularly in regard to the cause of women's rights in the early 1900s and race relations later in the century. Having come under her mother's crusading influence and affected by the progressive atmosphere at Smith, she never doubted the justness of the cause for the rights of women as citizens. "When I came home from Smith," she later recalled, "I wondered why people made speeches in favor of something so obviously right. Women breathed the same air, got the same education; it was ridiculous spending so much energy and elocution on something rightfully theirs." In Goldsboro, the feminist movement had already taken root with the creation of the Woman's Club in 1899, who had sponsored a controversial address by Mrs. Charlotte Perkins Stetson, a well-known feminist. Miss Weil became active in the Woman's Club and the women's rights movement and worked particularly hard to secure the passage of Women's suffrage.<sup>20</sup>

In 1919 she was elected president of the North Carolina Equal Suffrage League and worked to gain the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment granting the vote to women. In 1920 thirty-five states had ratified the amendment and only the approval of one more state was needed to secure its enactment as law. Miss Weil called upon League members

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and women throughout the state to lend support. She beseeched them to put their "shoulders to the wheel and make one strong final effort to secure ratification...The time is short," she declared. "Let us make the most of it. Think Ratification, Talk Ratification, Work Ratification. Make North Carolina the Perfect Thirty-six." Despite here efforts, the North Carolina legislature failed to approve the Nineteenth Amendment. But the amendment was ratified that same year when Tennessee endorsed it. At a meeting in Greensboro, the North Carolina Suffrage League was reorganized into the League of Women Voters, with Gertrude Weil elected the first president of the new organization. Miss Weil continued to work for women's rights through the new League.<sup>21</sup>

She was also in the forefront of such controversial movements as birth control and aid to black North Carolinians. She was secretary of the North Carolina Maternal Health League in 1935 and supported organizations such as the American Birth Control League, Inc., and the National Committee of Federal Legislation for Birth Control. She served on the North Carolina Committee of Interracial Cooperation which worked for improved conditions for blacks from 1922 to 1947. As secretary for the North Carolina Conference for Social Service she worked to improve health and education for children to prevent juvenile delinquency. She also served on the board directors of Dobbs Training School for delinquent girls, where one of its dormitories was named for her.<sup>22</sup> Miss Weil attracted political controversy in 1950 when she supported Frank Porter Graham, a strongly liberal candidate for the U. S. Senate, whose stand on civil rights for blacks was not universally popular in Wayne County.<sup>23</sup>

Gertrude Weil, a person of extraordinary physical energy, continued to be active in public and private causes until her death in 1971. When she was seventy, Goldsboro residents claim that she was diving from the pool springboard at the Goldsboro Country Club. She continued living in the Henry Weil House until her death, and the structure has been vacant since that time. In 1972 the Wayne Foundation, a Weil family charitable organization, planned to raze the house, but its efforts have been halted, and plans are now underway by local citizens to insure its survival.<sup>24</sup> The houses are still in danger, for the city seeks the property as a parking lot.

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Moses Roundtree, Strangers in the Land: The Story of Jacob Weil's Tribe (Philadelphia: Dorrance & Company, 1969), pp. 3-4.

<sup>2</sup> Roundtree, Strangers in the Land, pp. 2-4; History of North Carolina: North Carolina Biography, by a special staff of writers, VI, (New York: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1919) p. 357; Weymouth T. Jordan, Jr., and Louis H. Manarin, comps., North Carolina Troops: A Roster, Vol. IV, (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, 1973), p. 54.

<sup>3</sup> Roundtree, Strangers in the Land, pp. 7-8.

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<sup>4</sup> Goldsboro Argus, May 30, 1885; Goldsboro News-Argus, September 23, 1965; Roundtree, Strangers in the Land, pp. 8-9.

<sup>5</sup> Wayne County Deed Books, Office of the Register of Deeds, Wayne County Courthouse, Goldsboro, Deed Book 28:500, hereinafter cited as Wayne Deed Books; Roundtree, Strangers in the Land, pp. 7-8.

<sup>6</sup> Roundtree, Strangers in the Land, pp. 29, 33.

<sup>7</sup> Charlotte Daily Observer, May 26, 1875.

<sup>8</sup> Roundtree, Strangers in the Land, p. 38.

<sup>9</sup> Wayne Deed Book 38:323.

<sup>10</sup> Goldsboro News-Argus, July 4, 1976; Wayne Deed Book 44:426, 432.

<sup>11</sup> Roundtree, Strangers in the Land, pp. 43-44.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp. 85-86.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>14</sup> North Carolina Biography, VI, pp. 57-58.

<sup>15</sup> Wayne County Record of Wills, Office of the Clerk of Superior Court, Wayne County Courthouse, Will Book 3:553, 549, hereinafter cited as Wayne Will Books.

<sup>16</sup> Roundtree, Strangers in the Land, pp. 115-117.

<sup>17</sup> Wayne Will Book 6:97.

<sup>18</sup> Wayne Deed Book 191:107.

<sup>19</sup> Gertrude Weil Papers, 1856-1861, 1873-1970, Archives, Division of Archives and History, passim, hereinafter cited as Gertrude Weil Papers.

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<sup>20</sup>Roundtree, Strangers in the Land, p. 133.

<sup>21</sup>Elizabeth A. Taylor, "The Woman Suffrage Movement in North Carolina," Part II, North Carolina Historical Review, XXVIII (April, 1961), pp. 179, 182-184, 189.

<sup>22</sup>Gertrude Weil Papers, passim.

<sup>23</sup>Eli N. Evans, The Provincials: A Personal History of Jews in the South. (New York: Atheneum Company, 1973), p. 93; Roundtree, Strangers in the Land, pp. 130-132.

<sup>24</sup>Roundtree, Strangers in the Land, p. 136; Goldsboro News-Argus, July 4, 1976.



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Goldsboro News-Argus, 1965, 1976. Goldsboro, North Carolina.

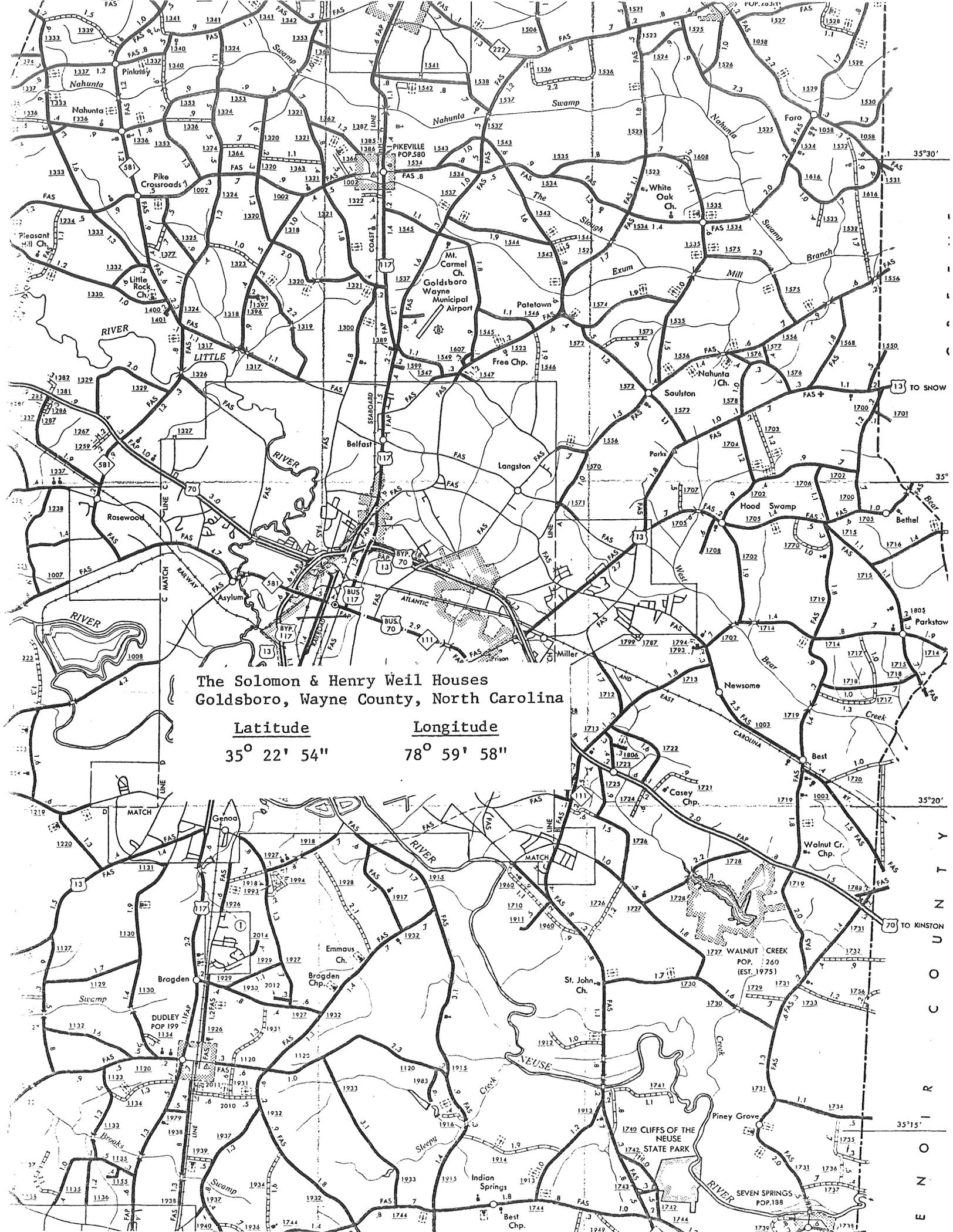
History of North Carolina: North Carolina Biography. Six volumes by a special Staff of writers. New York: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1919.

Jordan, Weymouth T. and Manarin, Louis H., compilers. North Carolina Troops, 1861-1865: A Roster. Five volumes. Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, 1973.

Roundtree, Moses. Strangers in the Land: The Story of Jacob Weil's Tribe. Philadelphia: Dorrance and Company, 1969.

Taylor, Elizabeth A. "The Woman Suffrage Movement in North Carolina". Part II. North Carolina Historical Review, XXVIII. (April, 1961).

Wayne County Records. Wayne County Courthouse. Goldsboro, North Carolina. (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).



The Solomon & Henry Weil Houses  
Goldsboro, Wayne County, North Carolina

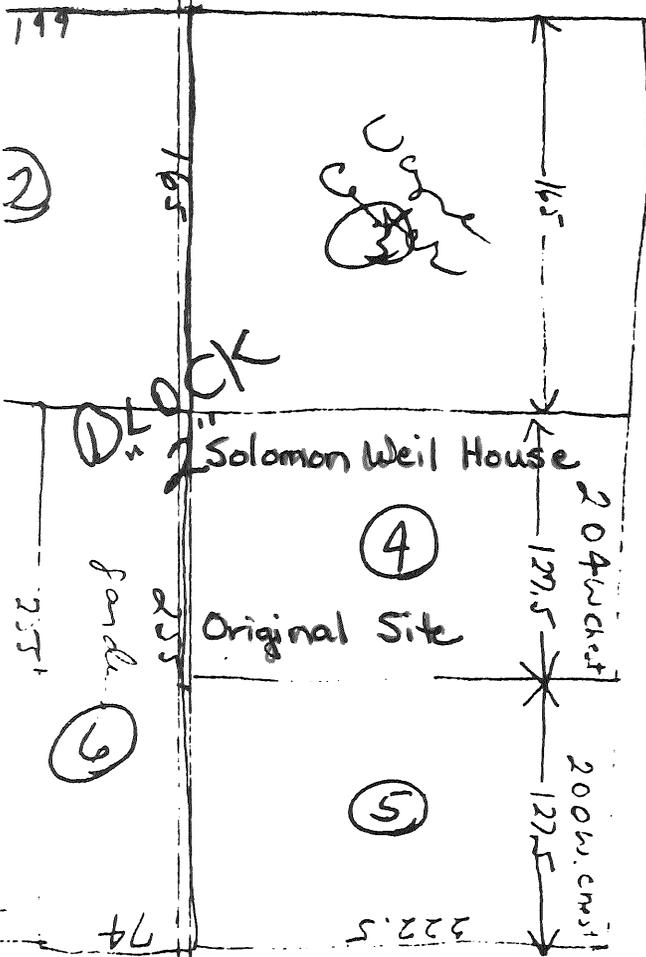
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BORDEN



W. CHESTNUT ST



JAMES ST



Wayne County Top map #54



