

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

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

1. Name

historic John Hector Clark House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Southeast corner of jct of S. Grove Street and E. Green Street (NC 211) not for publication

city, town Clarkton vicinity of

state North Carolina code 037 county Bladen code 017

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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<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. Thomas Woods

street & number Green Street

city, town Clarkton vicinity of state North Carolina 28433

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds, Bladen County Court House

street & number

city, town Elizabethtown state North Carolina 28337

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Bladen County Survey Files has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1974-1975 federal state county local

depository for survey records Survey and Planning Branch, N.C. Division of Archives and History

city, town Raleigh state North Carolina

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date <u>1928-29; 1932</u>

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The John Hector Clark House is a one-story board-and-batten "coastal cottage" with a characteristic broad gable roof extending to shelter its full-facade engaged front porch. It was apparently originally one room deep, with an engaged rear full-facade porch as well. The porch was apparently enclosed, and there is now a second tier of rooms, smaller than those in the main block, with a center hall. A small, one-room kitchen wing is attached to the west gable end; this may have once been the detached kitchen located adjacent to the rear porch. The house originally sat 100-125 feet to the northwest; in 1928-1929 it was moved to the present site to save it from demolition when NC 211 was built. In 1932 it was realigned on the same site to face NC 211, and the present low brick foundation was constructed.

The house retains the salient features of the "coastal cottage." Its single-shoulder exterior brick chimneys in the center of each gable end, five-bay front facade with six-panel center door framed by sidelights and transom, and the simple square Doric porch posts mark it as being of the Greek Revival style of the mid-nineteenth century. Decoration is limited to the louvered shutters hung to the sides of the double-hung sash windows.

Like the rectangular form of the house itself, details of construction are simple. The porch posts are spanned by four simple wooden rails, and entrance is gained by a short flight of brick steps guarded by a similar balustrade. Windows of the main block are composed of nine-over-six sash and are symmetrically disposed (two to each side of the door; and one to each side of the end chimneys, although that to the south side on the west end was enclosed with board and batten); those facing the porch are simply framed, while those more visible on the gable ends have a two-part Greek Revival style molding. In the kitchen wing and rear wall, the windows are shorter and randomly spaced. The blind scrollwork trim decorating the west raking cornice of the kitchen wing suggests carpentry of the late nineteenth century.

The original interior plan consisted of a center hall with two flanking rooms. This plan is intact but for a large elliptical arch which was cut into the west hall wall to expose the west parlor to full view. The formal character of both front rooms is set by original five-foot-high Greek Revival wood mantels in the center of each end wall, each composed of a tall, broad, plain frieze and mantel shelf supported by simple Doric pilasters. A recessed niche with shelving for books was installed on the original window opening to the left of the mantel in the west parlor; otherwise, the wall surfaces are covered with mid-twentieth century wallpapers. The west parlor currently serves as a living room, and the east room is used as the owner's bedroom. Window and door frames are simple, all crowned by a single molding. The wide pine board floors are intact in both rooms and the hall.

The original two-panel door with transom at the south end of the center hall (the original rear door), now opens to another shallow hall serving a small bedroom and bath in the southeast corner of the house. The room in the southwest corner serves as the dining room. The ceilings of these rear rooms follow the sloping configuration of the original porch roof. The kitchen is located in the aforementioned west wing.

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One small storage building stands behind the southwest corner of the house and is screened from the house by plantings. It is rectangular, sheathed with weatherboards, and covered with a gable roof. It appears to date from the 1920s or 1930s. The door in its east gable end is older and obviously reused. There may be remnants of early outbuildings located farther south of this property on Grove Street. The cores of two small freestanding dwellings on Grove Street, one of board-and-batten, the other of frame construction, look like outbuildings and are said by residents of the community to have once been part of the Clark property.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates	Builder/Architect
ca. 1865	Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The John Hector Clark House, a one-story board-and-batten Coastal Cottage erected about 1865, has local architectural significance for its distinctive architectural character and local historical significance as the residence of John Hector Clark, the man for whom the town of Clarkton was named in 1874. Clark (1821-1898) was important in every aspect of the area's trade during his day and achieved particular prominence in his turpentine and agricultural pursuits. He fathered a large family and his descendants have and continue to exercise high leadership and influence in the community and Bladen County.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT:

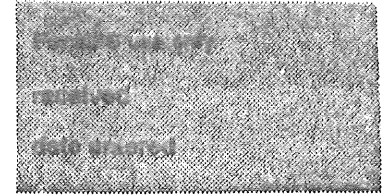
- B. The house is the only remaining structure associated with the productive life of John Hector Clark (1821-1898), being his residence for the last thirty years of his life when individually, and in cooperation with his brother-in-law, John D. Currie, he was actively involved in agriculture and naval stores production. During this time Clarkton grew from a small stop on the rail line to an important regional trading and naval stores center. The Cape Fear River Valley, to which Bladen County belongs, was one of the most important regions in the production of naval stores, perhaps the chief cash commodity in Tidewater North Carolina during much of the nineteenth century.
- C. The John Hector Clark House is a distinctive intact example of the Coastal Cottage form indigenous to Tidewater North Carolina. It is one of a small number of known examples in the state which are covered in board and batten. Although relocated on its original farm tract, the house retains its significant architectural features on both the exterior and interior.

CRITERIA EXCEPTION:

- B. The John Hector Clark House has been moved twice on the original house lot since Clark's death. The first move, in 1928-1929, moved the house 100-125 feet southeast of its original site to prevent its demolition because of the creation of NC 211 (Green Street). In 1932, when present owner and granddaughter Cora Clark Woods bought the house, she realigned it so that it is parallel to NC 211, built the present brick foundation, and restored the structure. Grove Street, bounding the lot on the west, was cut through the John Hector Clark property between 1939-1948, and takes its name from the grove of trees on the property. Some half-dozen large oaks and elms still shade the wide lawn surrounding the house; and preserve some of the nineteenth century ambiance of the property when Clark lived here. The environs are still sparsely-settled and residential in character, with fields to the south and southeast. Furthermore, because none of the significant features which give the house its architectural identity were adversely affected by the moves, the Clark House retains the integrity and associations necessary for nomination.

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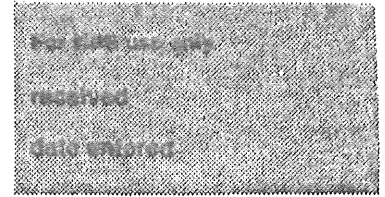
The John Hector Clark House, built around 1865, is located in the southeast corner of the junction of South Grove and East Green (NC 211) streets in the Clarkton community of southern Bladen County. The structure is a distinctive intact example of a board-and-batten Coastal Cottage with an engaged facade porch and rear porch rooms. The Clarkton area was settled in the mid-eighteenth century. Nearby Brown Marsh Presbyterian Church was established around 1756. The railroad arrived in 1858 and the community, then known as Brown Marsh Station, began to grow. The name was changed in 1870 to Dalton and in 1874 to Clarkton to honor the town's leading citizen, John Hector Clark. The local economy, based in the nineteenth century on naval stores, has for the most of the present century been dependent on agriculture, primarily tobacco and peanuts. Several of the area's largest tobacco warehouses are located in Clarkton (1908 pop., 664).

John Hector Clark (20 November 1821-27 May 1898), a merchant, farmer, and turpentine distiller, was involved in every important aspect of the area's trade during his day. The Bladen businessman was originally from Wilmington where his father, a native of Scotland, had immigrated early in the nineteenth century. In the 1840s, Clark began speculating in land in Bladen County.² John Duncan Currie, later his business partner, recalled that Clark "spent his first year in Bladen among the pines with hacker in his hands, as it was the first work offered him."³ By 1850, Clark was living in Bladen with his wife, the former Susannah Savage, and the first two of their three children: William, David, and Caroline. Clark was listed in the census of that year as a turpentine producer. Also in the household in 1850 were two adult males listed as laborers.⁴

According to family tradition, Clark's first Bladen residence was at Elizabethtown where he also ran a small store. Around 1865 he moved to what was then Brown Marsh Station where he built the present house. The relocation presented Clark with two advantages: it was on the rail line and was nearer to Brown Marsh Presbyterian Church, which he had regularly attended for some time. Family tradition also indicates that Clark served as an officer in the Bladen Home Guard during the Civil War.⁵

Clark certainly had need for a new, larger house by 1865. In addition to the three children by his first marriage, he had eight more, born between 1854 and 1869. Margaret Ann Currie Clark (16 February 1833-9 January 1892) gave birth to George, Amelia, Laura, Harriet, Sarah, John, Oscar, and Byron Clark. In 1870 the growing family had a live-in tutor. J. H. Clark was particularly concerned with the children's education. Each of the children received a college education. One became a doctor; another a minister; most remained in Bladen County.⁶

J. H. Clark's concern with education extended beyond his immediate family. Together with his brother-in-law, John D. Currie, he established in 1874 Clarkton Academy, offering free tuition to those unable to pay. The two maintained the academy until public schools were set up in the mid-1890s. Clark, described as a small man with red hair and beard, also built Clarkton's first post office building and the home for the town's first railroad agent, as well as several houses that he rented out. A devout Presbyterian, Clark helped build a sanctuary at Brown Marsh. (In 1911, thirteen years after Clark's death, the congregation moved into Clarkton and rechristened the church Clarkton Presbyterian Church.)

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In the 1876 session of the General Assembly, Clark represented Bladen County in the House of Representatives. Yet, this venture in politics was the single detour in a life devoted to trade and agriculture. Clark, in 1860, employed three men in his turpentine distillery, producing 700 barrels a year. In that year, he owned eight slaves and cultivated fifty of his 1,000 acres, primarily in corn and sweet potatoes. Clark had lesser plantings in 1860 in peas, beans, and Irish potatoes. He also kept a few apple and peach trees and maintained small livestock herds.

In the mid-1860s, Clark took on as a partner his brother-in-law, John D. Currie (1835-1901). Currie, aside from his business interests, edited the Clarkton Express, the county's first newspaper, in the 1870s. Clark and Currie invested \$2,000 in the turpentine distillery, where they employed three men in 1870 and produced 1,500 barrels of crude turpentine and 4,300 barrels of rosin with a combined value of \$24,600. Ten years later, the two employed ten men in the distillery as well as nine more in their cooperage (barrel-making) operation.¹⁰ As early as 1869 Clark and Currie operated a general store in Brown Marsh, (soon to be known as Clarkton). By 1890, they also had steam saw and grist mills. Tax lists indicate that Clark and Currie together owned 600 acres in 1883. For the last two decades of his life, J. H. Clark alone owned approximately 1,200 acres (he farmed about 150 acres) valued at \$12,000.¹² Eventually the business partnership dissolved and each entered business with his sons.

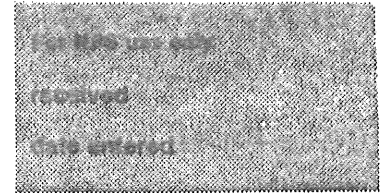
Following the death of his second wife, Margaret, in 1892, Clark married Mary Allen Wooten (her first marriage had been to F. M. Wooten). No children resulted from this third marriage. J. H. Clark's health began to decline early in 1898 and he died "of heart trouble" on May 27 at the age of seventy six. The editor of the Wilmington Messenger paid tribute to him as "one of the best men and most prominent citizens of Bladen County." In an accompanying article, his friend Currie wrote:

This announcement will carry sadness to the hearts of a host of friends, for who has visited Clarkton or passed this way that he has not met the cheering smile and kindly greeting of the "Old Countryman," a title he humorously assumed.

Currie further noted that Clark was a self-made businessman twice over. The first time was after arriving in Bladen with little money or education. Clark had been forced to start over after losing much of his investment during the war. "J. H. Clark bore losses like a stoic, and never from his lips was heard to fall a complaint against Providence," Currie concluded, "Peace to your ashes, genial, jovial, departed friend."¹³

Clark's sons, George and Oscar, were appointed as executors of his estate. Owing to his work as a merchant and to his many contacts in the area, John Hector Clark died with over 300 people indebted to him, most for small amounts. An account of the sale of his personal property, which took place on June 22, 1898, runs to twenty-two pages and over 800 items. These included farm equipment and conveyances, livestock, carpentry tools, and office supplies. The total proceeds of the estate sale came to just under \$1,500.¹⁴

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Clark's widow, Mary, inherited the house upon his death and lived there for several years, until her move into Wilmington. Oscar Lee Clark (1865-1930), also a merchant and farmer, received the house when she died. It is unclear whether or how long he and his family might have lived there. O. L. and Cora Clark had seven children born between 1888 and 1907 and owned another house in Clarkton.¹⁵

In the late 1920s, the road through town, now NC 211, was rerouted. As a consequence, the house, vacant at the time, was moved a short distance. Shortly after O. L. Clark's death in 1930, his houses were put up to public sale (he had become insolvent. His daughter Cora, born in 1897, became the new owner of the house her grandfather had built and fitted it up as her residence. Cora Withers¹⁶ Clark, who married Thomas Woods, lived there until her recent move to a nursing home. Thus, the property remained in the hands of the Clark family, whose members have played a central role in the life and economy of Clarkton and Bladen County since before the Civil War. The importance of that role has been recognized by the placement of a plaque on the house by the Bladen County Historical Society.

FOOTNOTES

¹William S. Powell, The North Carolina Gazetteer (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969), p. 108; Bill Sharpe, A New Geography of North Carolina (Raleigh: Sharpe Publishing Company, 1961), III, pp. 1152-1153. Clarkton native Guy Owen used his hometown as the fictional setting for several of his novels including The Ballad of the Flim-Flam Man (1965). Owen called the town Clayton in his books. Wilmington Star, 13 November 1978.

²Bladen County Deed Book 8, pp. 522, 548-550, and 578.

³Wilmington Messenger, 28 May 1898.

⁴Seventh Census, 1850, Population Schedule.

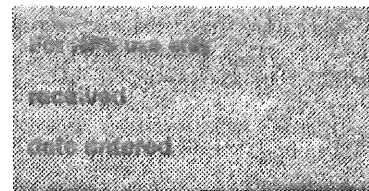
⁵Wilmington Star, 23 May 1966; Louis Manarin (comp.), North Carolina Troops, 1861-1865: A Roster (Raleigh: Department of Archives and History, 1966-). A check was made of both the published rosters and of the unpublished Compiled Service Records in the North Carolina State Archives. No record of Clark's service in the Home Guard could be located.

⁶Ninth Census, 1870, Population Schedule; Wilmington Star, 23 May 1966.

⁷Wilmington Star, 23 May 1966; Levi Branson (comp.), Branson's North Carolina Business Directory (Raleigh: various publishers, 1878-1896), 1877-78 ed., p. 37; 1884 ed., p. 146; 1890 ed., p. 110; and 1896 ed., p. 109; hereinafter cited as Branson's with appropriate year and page. See also an ad for the academy in the Bladen Bulletin, 12 August 1886.

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⁸ John L. Chency (comp.) North Carolina Government: A Narrative and Statistical History, revised edition (Raleigh: Secretary of State, 1981), p. 457.

⁹ Eighth Census, 1860, Agricultural, Slave, and Manufacturing Schedules.

¹⁰ Ninth and Tenth Censuses, 1870 and 1880, Manufacturing Schedules.

¹¹ Branson's, 1869, p. 20, and 1890, p. 110.

¹² Bladen County Tax List, North Carolina State Archives; Eleventh Census, 1880, Agricultural Schedule.

¹³ Wilmington Messenger, 28 May 1898. The tribute was signed with the initials "J.D.C." Slaves, Currie wrote of the 1860s, were the "guilt-edge investment of those days." The curious reference was either a Freudian or typographical slip.

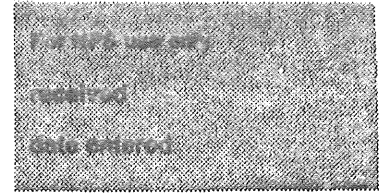
¹⁴ Bladen County Record of Accounts, 1893-1917, North Carolina State Archives.

¹⁵ Twelfth and Thirteenth Censuses, 1900 and 1910, Population Schedules.

¹⁶ Information supplied by Madeline G. Clark, copy in the Survey and Planning Branch, Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina. In recent years, Cora Woods transferred a portion of the rear of the property to her niece Alice Green, wife of former Lieutenant Governor Jimmy Green.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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United States Bureau of the Census. Seventh through Thirteenth Censuses, 1850-1910: Population, Agricultural, Slave, and Manufacturing Schedules.

Wilmington Messenger, 28 May 1898.

Wilmington Star, 28 May 1966 and 13 November 1978.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See attachment

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Whiteville

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UTM References

A

1	7	7	1	5	4	0	0	3	1	8	1	8	6	1	5	0
Zone				Easting				Northing								

B

Zone				Easting				Northing								

C

Zone				Easting				Northing								

D

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 5843 and Parcel 5786, Block 47, Bladen County North Carolina Property Ownership Map No. 1206.06. These two parcels form the present house grounds and have continued in association with the dwelling.

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

name/title Architectural description by Diane Filipowicz: Statement of significance by Michael Hill, staff.

organization N.C. Div. of Archives and History date Sept. 1, 1986

street & number 109 E. Jones St. telephone (919)733-6545

city or town Raleigh state North Carolina 27611

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. King, Jr.

title State Historic Preservation Officer date October 9, 1986

For NPS use only

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

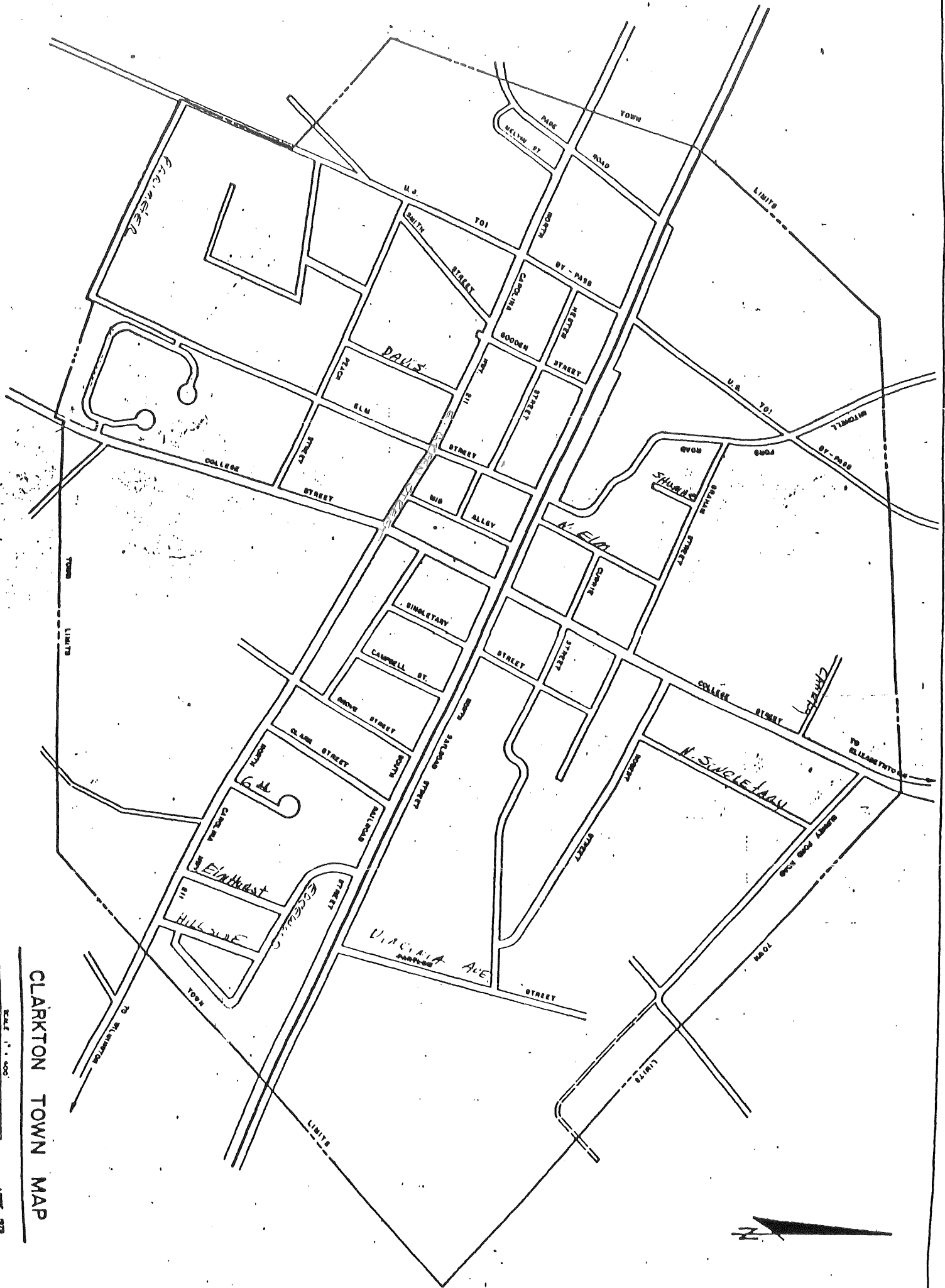
date

Keeper of the National Register

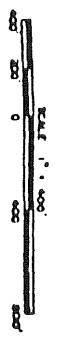
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



CLARKTON TOWN MAP



APRIL, 1978
REVISED 9/19/84



