

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR  
Fayetteville

MULTIPLE RESOURCE OR  THEMATIC NOMINATION

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC John A. Oates House

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

406 St. James Square

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Fayetteville

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

7th

STATE

North Carolina

VICINITY OF

CODE  
037

COUNTY

Cumberland

CODE  
051

**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 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 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
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Oates, J. S. Est. c/o I. C. Hunter

STREET & NUMBER

406 St. James Square

CITY, TOWN

Fayetteville

VICINITY OF

STATE  
North Carolina

28301

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Register of Deeds, Cumberland County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 2039

CITY, TOWN

Fayetteville

STATE  
North Carolina

28302

**6 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Linda Jasperse, Principal Investigator, City of Fayetteville

ORGANIZATION

Consultant for Survey and Planning Branch

DATE

March 31, 1982

STREET & NUMBER

Division of Archives and History, 109 E. Jones Street

TELEPHONE

1-919-733-6545

CITY OR TOWN

Raleigh

STATE

North Carolina 27611

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<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		

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

Located at the intersection of Green and Grove Streets, the John A. Oates House stands as the sole reminder of the area around James Square, once a political center for Cumberland County during the late eighteenth and well into the nineteenth century. Exhibiting a notable Classical Revival form adopted during an extensive renovation in 1909 by its owner John A. Oates, the house retains portions of its original fabric, especially in its underpinnings, dating from its tenure as the hostelry for Barge's Tavern. The present-day significance of the dwelling primarily stems from its association with John A. Oates, a lawyer, judge, publisher, author, educator, and historian of local prominence, in addition to its important Classical Revival architectural character.

The John A. Oates House is a two-story five-bay frame dwelling, which is dominated by a colossal two-story pedimented portico supported by four fluted columns and decorated with a dentil cornice. Built on a brick foundation which conceals massive and sturdy beams, the weatherboarded walls contain fenestration consisting of a central entrance bay, and 1/1 sash windows with molded architraves in both the lower and upper stories of the outer bays. The entrance bay has double doors with panes of oval beveled glass on the first story, and a single door fronted by a balcony with heavily-turned features, like brackets, balusters, and spherical ornament, on the second. The roof which caps the main block forms a cross gable, and some of the ends are pedimented and display dentil trim. Handsome detailing of this type is found scattered throughout, such as the dentil cornice and molded cornerboards.

The remaining elevations have many of the same basic features as the front. Some changes in fenestration does occur on the north side where dining room windows have 3/6 sashes. There are three rear projections, all with gable roofs. A total of five chimneys are scattered throughout and serve the main block and rear projections. On the south end is a glassed-in conservatory.

The John A. Oates House interior as remodeled has a central hall with a rear staircase placement. The front double doors, which have oval beveled glass, an egg and dart motif, molded architraves, and heavy recessed panels in the lower half, open into the hall. Parlors with sliding doors flank the hall, the most notable being the north one. It contains a fireplace with a classically-inspired surround, featuring stylized Ionic pilasters, a heavily molded shelf, and a flat-paneled architrave. A molded cornice and foliated plaster ceiling medallion also adorn this room.

The staircase, which is situated perpendicularly to the far end of the main hall, has simple flat paneling enclosing the stringer, a square newel post and balusters, and a rounded handrail. This staircase accesses the upstairs which contains three bedrooms.

The back hall terminates just beyond the staircase base and forms a leg to permit access to a right rear bedroom. Directly across the hall is a dining room, a kitchen, and a small storage room which once housed a kitchen.

**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

\_\_\_\_ NATIONAL

\_\_\_\_ STATE

 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" 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 1909

BUILDER/ARCHITECT unknown

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The John A. Oates House is a two-story five-bay frame dwelling which is modeled in the Classical Revival style and exhibits a prominent two-story pedimented portico at the front, molded door and window surrounds, and dentil and egg-and-dart detailing. It is situated on a highly visible site near the busy Fayetteville intersection of Grove, Ramsey, Rowan and Green streets, once part of a prime local residential area. This house, owned and remodeled in the early twentieth century by John A. Oates, lawyer, judge, educator, and community-minded citizen, is one of only three period houses remaining in the immediate area. Resting once in the shadow of the former late eighteenth/early nineteenth century Cumberland County courthouse at James Square, its historic associations reach back almost two hundred years, for the site on which it stands was occupied by a hotel and tavern whose old foundation and other components form the base of the present day house.

**CRITERIA ASSESSMENT**

- B. The dwelling is associated with the life and career of John A. Oates, prominent local lawyer, judge, educator, and community advocate, who owned and modified the house to its present style in the early twentieth century.
- C. The John A. Oates House is one of the few structures to exhibit the Classical Revival style in Fayetteville and exhibits such distinguishing features as two story frame construction with a colossal pedimented front portico supported by four fluted columns, a dentil cornice, molded corner boards, and robust woodwork.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

John A. Oates' association with the house on the north side of Grove Street at James Square started as early as 1897 when he married its owner, Emma E. Dodd.<sup>1</sup> He gained formal possession of it in 1923, and in the intervening years remodeled it to its present Classical Revival style.<sup>2</sup> Its previous century historical associations are strong, however, and help to distinguish it as a local landmark.

James Square, named for early benefactor James Hogg, was the county courthouse site around 1800. Nearby were clustered dwellings, commercial establishments, and law enforcement-related buildings. Local reports hold that the John A. Oates property was originally owned by Lewis and George Barge who operated in part a hotel and a tavern, the latter being the present day Barge's Tavern which has since been severed and relocated.<sup>3</sup> Although the early history of the house is obscure, some architectural evidence in the central core does suggest a late eighteenth/early nineteenth century construction phase.

The importance of the dwelling in Fayetteville's architectural and historical record, however, is its classical revival character and its associations with prominent Fayetteville resident John A. Oates, who created that character during an extensive 1908 remodelling. He married a widow, Emma E. Dodd, c.1897, and her family, the Cains, had owned or occupied the house as early as 1868.<sup>4</sup>

The property was known at that time as the Millar Place, after the family who owned it between 1826 and 1858.<sup>5</sup> Julia Cain became the owner of the house and lot by settlement in 1868, after an intermediate transfer. She deeded it to her sister and brother-in-law Emilene E. and W. Murphy Dodd in 1875.<sup>6</sup> Emilene, or "Emmie", retained ownership even after her widowhood, and eventually transferred it to her second husband, John A. Oates in 1923.<sup>7</sup> His association with the house and the 1908 remodelling which he carried out predate his formal ownership.

John A. Oates was born in 1870, the son of John Alexander and Mary Jewell Ashford Oates of Sampson County. He was a graduate of Wake Forest College and later entered the legal profession.<sup>8</sup> He actively pursued the profession in

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Please see continuation sheet.

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 7	6, 9, 3	6, 6, 0	3, 8	8, 1	2, 7, 0	B						
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING				ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING		
C							D						

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All of lot 8, Block B, Map 78-2-4, Cross Creek Township, as outlined in red on map. See map section.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

John A. Oates House      Significance/  
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date entered

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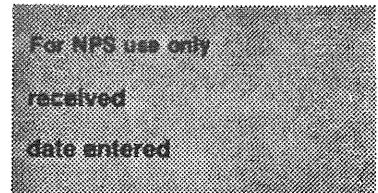
Fayetteville, was a licensed attorney (1910), a member of the Cumberland County Bar Association, the first judge of the recorder's court (1913), and the school board attorney. Oates promoted educational efforts by serving as chairman of the mayor-appointed Committee on Education (1900), the board of education and the board of trustees in the City and/or county schools, and served on the state board of education. He was active in politics as a state senator in the General Assembly (1917), and in business as president of the local Chamber of Commerce even before it was incorporated in 1924.

Oates was also a devout Baptist and worked to spread the cause by operating the North Carolina Baptist Publishing Company in the first decade of this century, by publishing the North Carolina Baptist briefly, by serving as president of the Baptist State Convention in 1916, and by faithfully attending Fayetteville's First Baptist Church. The list of contributions of this well-accomplished individual is long, but perhaps one of the most enduring is his authorship of the 900 page The Story of Fayetteville, and the Upper Cape Fear in 1950, one of the few available narratives on local history.<sup>10</sup>

John Oates died in 1958, at which time the house and surrounding property went by will to his second wife, Isabelle, (now Isabelle Hunter) and their two married children. It is still in their possession today, and the owners are currently exploring various possibilities for the adaptive re-use of the structure.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form



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John A. Oates House: Reference Notes

<sup>1</sup>From the Oates Bible, as compiled by the Colonel Robert Rowan Chapter of the Daughters of The American Revolution, "Bible Records of Cumberland County, North Carolina and other Socialites" (Fayetteville, Cumberland County; compiled 1958-1959), 120.

<sup>2</sup>Interview with Isabelle Oates Hunter, by Linda Jasperse, 17 June 1981, Fayetteville, North Carolina; Emma E. Oates and others to John A. Oates, Cumberland County Deeds, Office of the Register of Deeds, Cumberland County Courthouse, Fayetteville, Book 298, Page 287, hereinafter cited as Cumberland County Deeds.

<sup>3</sup>Junior Service League of Fayetteville, Inc., "A Guide to Historic Fayetteville and Cumberland County" (Fayetteville: The 1975 Provisional Class of the Junior Service League of Fayetteville, 1976), 20, ; Will of Lewis Barge, Senior, Cumberland County Wills, Book "A", Page 139, Estates Records Division, Cumberland County Courthouse, Fayetteville, North Carolina, hereinafter cited as Cumberland County Wills.

<sup>4</sup>Cumberland County Deeds, Book 61, Page 241.

<sup>5</sup>Cumberland County Deeds, Book 37, Page 35; Book 54, Page 251.

<sup>6</sup>Cumberland County Deeds, Book 64, Page 240.

<sup>7</sup>Cumberland County Deeds, Book 298, Page 287.

<sup>8</sup>Lucile Miller Johnson, "The Gracious Oates Home," in Hometown Heritage (Raleigh: The Graphic Press, 1978), 30-31.

<sup>9</sup>John A. Oates, The Story of Fayetteville and the Upper Cape Fear (Charlotte, N.C.: The Dowd Press, Inc., 1950; reprinted, Raleigh, N.C.: Litho Industries Incorporated, 1972), 128, 296, 299, 315, 458-461, 526, 550, hereinafter cited as Oates, Story of Fayetteville. *3rd edition (Fayetteville; Fayetteville Women's Club, 1981)*

<sup>10</sup>Oates, Story of Fayetteville, 324, 504.

<sup>11</sup>Cumberland County Vital Statistics, Death Records, Book 59, Page 175; Cumberland County Wills, Book "O", Page 232.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

John A. Oates House Bibliographical

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References

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