

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

THEME: Architecture

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DATE ENTERED

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 Chowan County Court House

AND/OR COMMON

Chowan County Court House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER East King Street, head of the Green

CITY, TOWN

Edenton

___ VICINITY OF

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

North Carolina

CODE

037

COUNTY

Chowan

CODE

041

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 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 type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Chowan County

STREET & NUMBER

Office of the County Commissioners, County Court House

CITY, TOWN

Edenton

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

North Carolina

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Chowan County Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

County Court House

CITY, TOWN

Edenton

STATE

North Carolina

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE North Carolina Inventory of Historic Properties

DATE

in progress

___ FEDERAL STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

Division of Archives and History, Survey and Planning Section

CITY, TOWN

Raleigh

STATE

North Carolina

DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input 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

The Chowan County Court House stands on the north side of East King Street about one block east of the central business district of Edenton, North Carolina. The building faces south across East King Street toward a small park, known as Court House Green, and the shore of Edenton Bay. In the immediate vicinity of the court house are a number of the city's oldest houses, many of them of architectural and/or historical significance.

Erected in 1767, the Chowan County Court House is a two-story building with a T-shaped plan and a one-story semicircular apse at its center rear. The main block of the building is approximately 68½ feet wide and 30 feet deep; the rear leg of the T is 33 feet wide and projects 17 feet. In each angle of the main block and the rear leg is a one-story office addition, date uncertain. The court house is constructed of brick laid in Flemish bond with wood trim painted white.

Exterior detailing on the court house is distinctly Georgian but in general of the simplest. The five-bay front facade is dominated by a three-bay (33 feet) projecting pavilion topped by a classic pediment. The main entrance, at the center of the pavilion, is flanked by Doric pilasters carrying an entablature and a triangular pediment. Windows--9/9 sash on the first floor, 9/6 on the second--are topped by flat brick arches. A belt course marks the second floor line and a cornice ornamented with modillions forms a continuous line below the hipped roof.

The most ornate exterior feature is the two-stage wooden cupola with ogival roof surmounted by a tall weathervane. The lower stage is square and carries a clock on each face, those on the east, south, and west framed by open pediments supported by slender brackets. The upper stage is octagonal and has round-arched, louvered openings set in molded surrounds with keystones. The rear slope of the roof is broken by a slender chimney on either side of the cupola.

The first floor of the court house is devoted almost entirely to a large courtroom. In the semicircular apse on the rear (north) wall of this room is a high-backed, pedimented judge's chair, similar to that in the House of Burgesses at Williamsburg prior to 1747. The courtroom was altered somewhat, probably between 1840 and 1850, when the original floor was covered with wood and six columns were put in as support for the floor above; however, the dado of the apse, the balustraded railing, and the judge's chair are unchanged. The courtroom is flanked by two offices on the east and an office and the stair hall on the west.

(Continued)

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The major portion of the second floor of the court house is occupied by the assembly hall (also used as a ballroom), containing original full-height paneling and a complete entablature. Measuring 30 by 45 feet with a 13 foot high ceiling, this was said to be the largest paneled room in the colonies. Individual panels, hand-carved in white pine, are 33 inches wide, 48 inches long, and 1½ inches thick. The assembly hall is flanked by a Masonic Room (Unanimity Lodge) on the east and an office and the stair hall on the west.

B 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/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" 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 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 1767

BUILDER/ARCHITECT unknown (see below)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Chowan County Court House in Edenton, North Carolina, is a two-story brick structure with a T-shaped plan and a one-story semicircular apse at its center rear. Erected in 1767, the Court House is one of the most notable Georgian public buildings in the United States and probably the finest surviving example of the type in the Southern colonies. Maintained in excellent condition, the Chowan County Court House is little-altered and retains most its original interiors. The building still serves as the county court house and is also open to visitors during regular business hours.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Edenton, known as Queen Anne's Town until its incorporation in 1727, dates from 1658 and was North Carolina's first permanent settlement. In 1715 the colony's Assembly passed an act providing for the construction at Edenton of a court house in which its sessions could be held. That building was completed in 1719. The second and existing court house was erected in 1767.

The architect of the Chowan County Court House is unknown. However, it has been attributed to Gilbert Leigh, who is believed to have come originally from Williamsburg, Virginia, and who was living in Edenton at the time the building was constructed. More recently, the court house has also been attributed to John Hawkes, who was brought from England to design Governor William Tryon's Palace at New Bern, North Carolina (completed in 1769 or 1770).

The small open space on which the court house fronts is known as Court House Green. Reserved as public property in 1712 when Edenton was laid out on its present plan, the green was the site of the 1719 court house. About the time of the American Revolution, this land was cleared for use as a drill ground. By 1800, it had become the small park which it is today.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See Continuance Sheet)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 2 acres

UTM REFERENCES Lat. 36° 03' 28" , Long. 76° 36' 30"

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(See Continuance Sheet)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE Polly M. Rettig, Historian, Landmark Review Project; original form prepared by Charles W. Snell, Historian, 10/69

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

DATE

3/12/75

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street NW.

TELEPHONE

202-523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C. 20240

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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE N/A National Historic Landmark

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, NATIONAL SYSTEM OF ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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Edenton Woman's Club. Guide Book: Colonial Edenton and Chowan County
(Edenton, 1975).

Morrison, Hugh. Early American Architecture (New York, 1952).

Parramore, Thomas C. Cradle of the Colony: The History of Chowan County
and Edenton, North Carolina (Edenton, 1967).

Waterman, Thomas T. and F. B. Johnson. The Early Architecture of North
Carolina (Chapel Hill, 1941).

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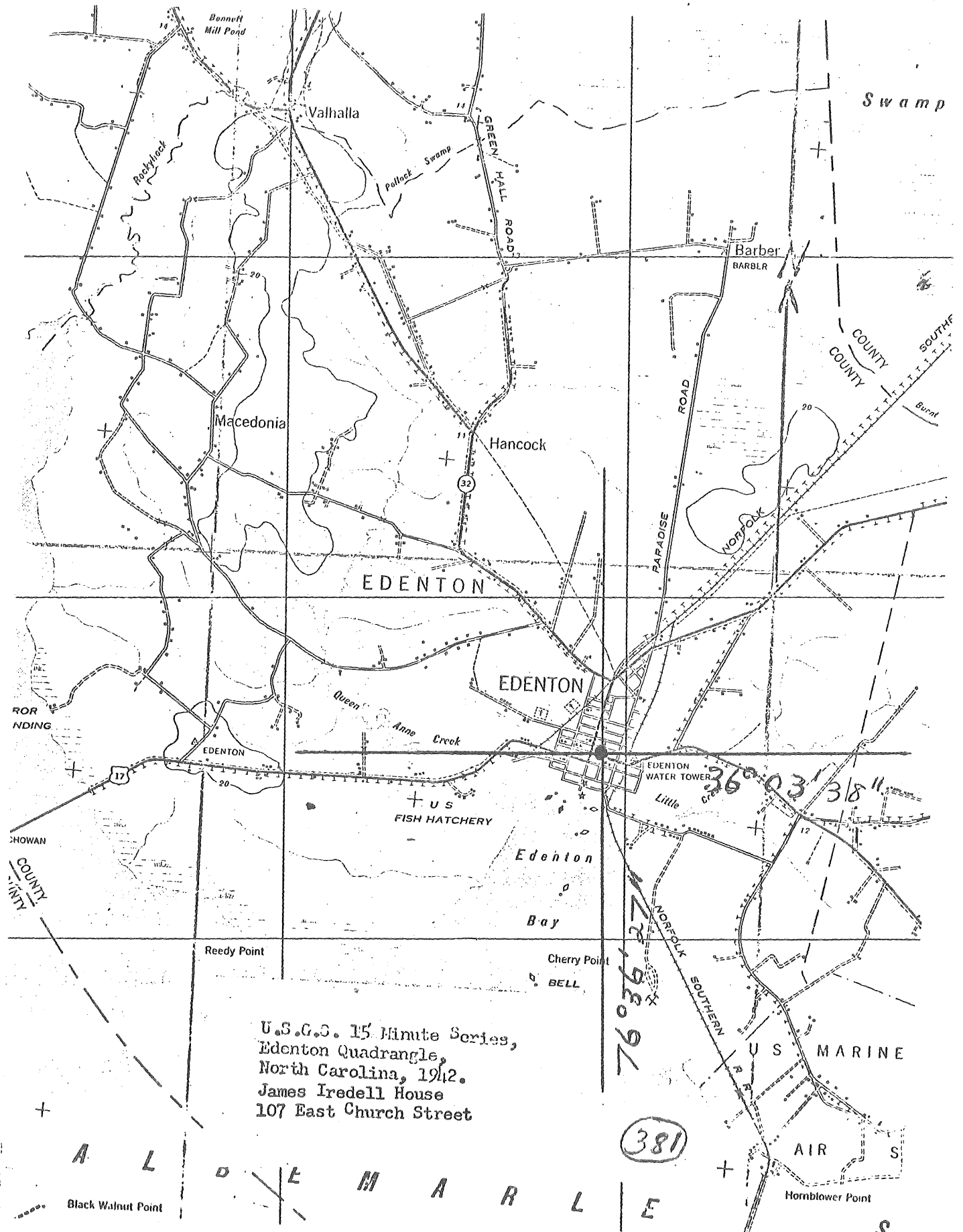
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Boundaries of the National Historic Landmark designation for the Chowan County Court House--including the building itself and the adjacent Court House Green--are defined as follows: beginning at the intersection of the center lines of Court Street and East Water Street; thence, westerly along the center line of East Water Street to its intersection with the center line of Colonial Avenue; thence, northerly along the center of Colonial Avenue and its extension (an alley running between the County Court House and the office building next west on East King Street) to its intersection with the southern line of residential property located immediately north of (behind) the Chowan County Court House; thence, easterly along said southern line extended to the center line of Court Street; thence, southerly along the center line of Court Street to the point of beginning.

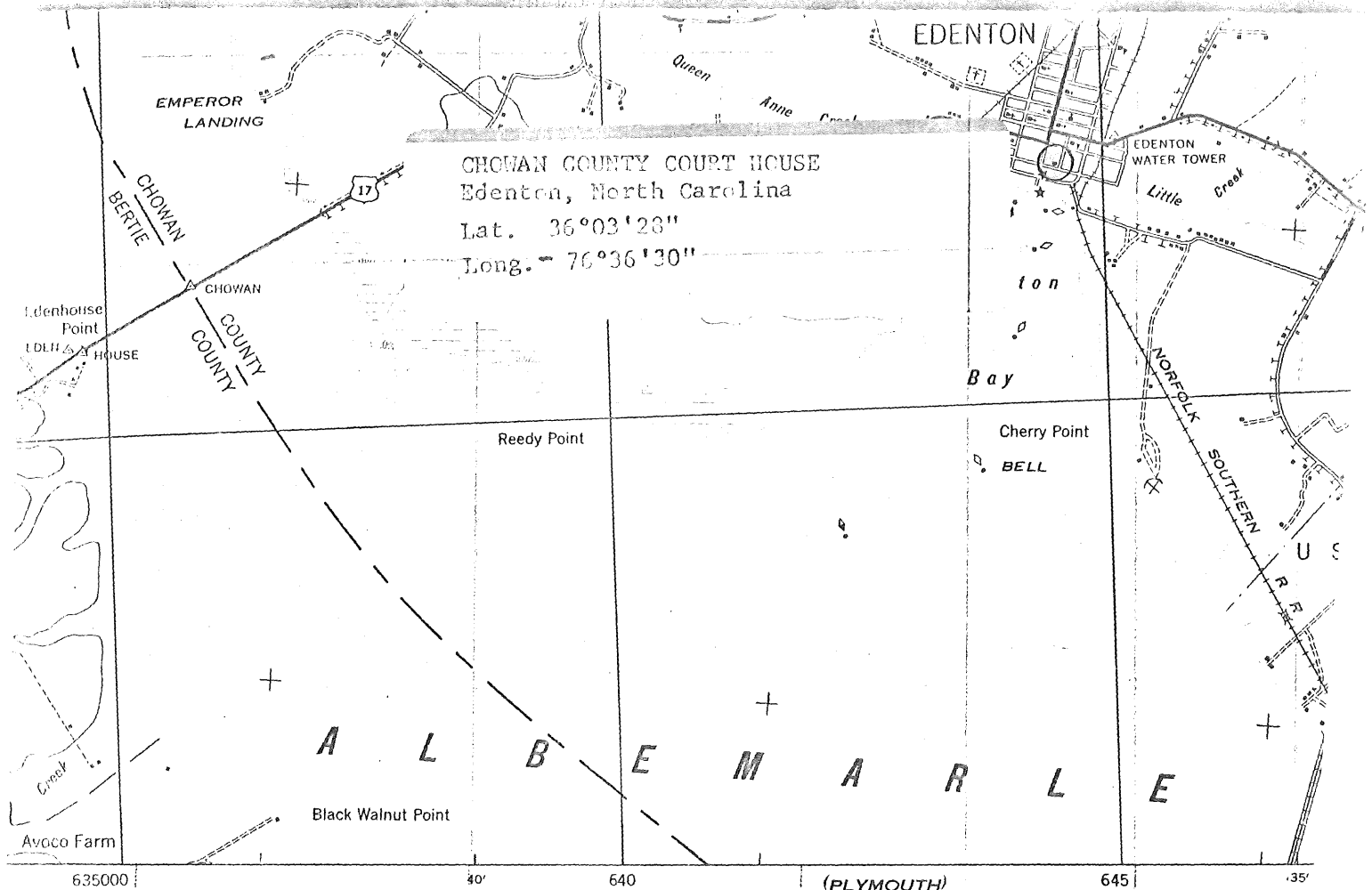


U.S.G.S. 15 Minute Series,
 Edenton Quadrangle,
 North Carolina, 1942.
 James Iredell House
 107 East Church Street

A L D E M A R L E

(381)

Hornblower Point

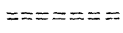
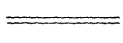


Engineers,
7 and 30th Engineers, 1941.
ators.

CLASSIFICATION 1942

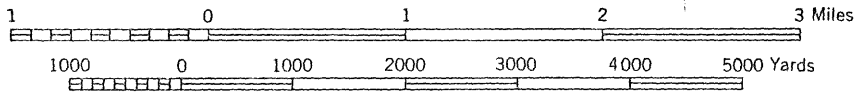
Graded earth, gravel
and stone

Unimproved



U. S. Route 

State Route 



CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET--DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL (1929 ADJ.)

NOTE OFFICERS USING THIS MAP WILL MARK HEREON CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS WHICH COME TO THEIR ATTENTION AND MAIL DIRECT TO THE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS, WASHINGTON, D. C.

