

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: North Carolina
COUNTY: Catawba
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

1. NAME

COMMON: Perkins House
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: S.R. 1717 (Oxford School Road), 0.6 mi. south of junction with I-40, turn east 0.6 mi. on private road to house			
CITY OR TOWN: Newton vicinity		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Tenth	
STATE: North Carolina	CODE: 37	COUNTY: Catawba	CODE: 035

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <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 (Specify) _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Mr. and Mrs. Roy M. Schmarkey & sons; William P. and Roy, Jr.		
STREET AND NUMBER: 2353 13th Street, N.E.		
CITY OR TOWN: Hickory	STATE: North Carolina	CODE: 37

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Catawba County Courthouse		
STREET AND NUMBER:		
CITY OR TOWN: Newton	STATE: North Carolina	CODE: 37

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:			
DATE OF SURVEY:	<input type="checkbox"/> Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> State	<input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE:	

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

Excellent     Good     Fair     Deteriorated     Ruins     Unexposed

(Check One)

Altered     Unaltered     Moved     Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

On a knoll, facing south toward the Yadkin River, is the Perkins House, a two-story dwelling of brick laid in Flemish bond. It is a plain, sturdy, Federal house with handsome brickwork and is related to other houses of the period in the area. The main (south) facade is three bays wide with a central entrance containing a door with nine flat panels surmounted by a five-light transom. It is hung on rising strap hinges, a very unusual feature. The house has simple, molded architraves at all openings and nine-over-nine sash at the first level and nine-over-six sash at the second. Over all the windows are flat arches. A crude, hip-roof porch protects the first-floor bays of the main facade. The two-bay west side is dominated by a very wide, double shoulder chimney with flared headers forming diamond-shaped patterns down the face of the chimney. The molded cornice carries across the front and rear elevations and into the east and west ends. The east side resembles the west except the chimney is not as wide and lacks the ornamental brick pattern. The cellar entrance is located just to the south of this chimney and is roofed with the remains of the raised-paneled shutters which once were at the windows. The rear facade is similar to the front, except that two east bays are covered by a one-story frame addition, and at the west bay is a shed porch.

The house follows a "Quaker" plan, with the central entrance leading into the great room located on the east side of the house. The wainscot, mantel, cornice and stair of this room were removed by the Museum of Southern Decorative Arts, Old Salem, North Carolina. These pieces may be seen there under the heading of the "Catawba Room." The two remaining rooms of the first floor have most of their woodwork except for the mantels. The wainscot features runs of square, flat panels with the chair rail becoming the outer edge of the window sills. The windows are set in deep reveals and have molded architraves with the reveals highlighted by flat panels which end abruptly at the edge where the plaster walls begin. Just above the reveal, set in the plaster, is a curious, curving valance. (According to MESDA, these valances were once over all the doors and windows of the first floor.) The stair rises across the rear wall of the main room from east to west. The second-floor plan appears to have originally repeated the first; however, the great room has been partitioned into one large and one small room and a hall. The most elaborate door architraves on the second floor feature four molded elements and lead from the great room into the two smaller rooms; all the doors to these rooms have flat panels. The other original architraves on this floor are three-part molded ones. Also found in the small rooms here is a three-part molded baseboard and a molded chair rail which is similar to the first floor, and repeats the window treatment. The windows of the second floor have no reveals.

The recently sheathed walls of the two small rooms reveal only robustly molded square fire opening surrounds. The mantel from the second-floor large room is also in MESDA. The partially enclosed stair which rose along the south wall of the great room has been turned to rise from the hall but still features a fluted pilaster and the profiles of diagonally set, slender, square balusters and a chair rail.

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The woodwork which was removed is among the most elaborate vernacular Adamesque known in the Piedmont, and has a hint of Georgian character as well. The mantel that was in the first-floor main room features a heavy molded architrave flanked by fluted pilasters that terminate in robust consoles with a stylized foliated motif. The tall frieze features an urn garlanded in high relief and curvilinear foliated pattern, and the flanking areas of the frieze also have urns in relief joined to the end and central elements by a garland and tassel. The molded cornice shelf breaks over all three elements. The overmantel is equally elaborate, being flanked by heavy fluted pilasters and having a tall central panel containing an oval outlined by a curvilinear reeded molding. The side areas have four flat panels each, with reeded fans in the corners between the rails and styles. The entablature has a frieze with an urn and acanthus pattern beneath a wall-of-troy-cornice. This entablature carries across the wall. The mantel and cornice are obviously related to those at Rosedale in Charlotte. The mantel formerly in the second-story main room is much simpler. Fluted pilasters flank a molded architrave and are topped by paneled end blocks. The frieze is plain. Fluted pilasters also flank an open, plastered rectangle above the mantel and carry a heavy entablature. In the plastered area is a painted circle apparently featuring a tree with birds. The mantel does not reach the main cornice of this room, which is a full entablature with mutules beneath a cornice of wall-of-troy. Also at MESDA are several doors and valances, resembling those remaining in the house. (A signature read by MESDA as "M. J. Cocker" is painted on the upper room mantel; MESDA surmises that it may be the master builder's name, but the ownership of the house by the Cockerham and Cochran families in the nineteenth century should be considered.)

To the west of the house is a one-story frame structure believed to have been the kitchen at one time but was later converted to a garage.

**3. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) ca. 1790

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | <u>Exploration and Settlement</u>                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |  | _____   |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Perkins House is, despite the removal of the fine woodwork of its two major rooms, among the more important early dwellings in the Piedmont. It was probably built for "Gentleman" John Perkins, a mid-eighteenth century guide for the Moravians and later a prominent citizen of western North Carolina. The sturdy character and excellent brickwork of the house make it exemplary of the two-story brick dwellings of the early settlers of the Piedmont. The simplicity of the structure provides an interesting foil and important context for the remarkably ornate and inventive Adamesque interiors, now at the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts.

"Gentleman" John Perkins was "among the first settlers west of the Catawba River." He was born September 15, 1733, in Frederick County, Virginia, and first came to present-day Catawba County in 1747 with the family of his uncle, Adam Sherrill. In 1752 he was chosen by Bishop August Gottlieb Spangenberg of the Moravian Brotherhood of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, to aid the brotherhood in its search for the site of a proposed permanent settlement in western North Carolina. Perkins, then only nineteen years old, accompanied the Spangenberg expedition as hunter and guide, and apparently made a favorable impression upon the bishop, who later recommended him to the Brethren as "intelligent, best acquainted with the forest, industrious, a successful hunter, and I think fond of the Brethren." It is also likely that the bishop was instrumental in obtaining for Perkins a land grant of considerable size from the Earl of Granville (who had agreed to sell to the Moravians a 100,000-acre tract); by 1755 Perkins was the owner of several thousand acres of prime land in present-day Catawba and Burke counties.

The following year Perkins apparently killed a Catawba Indian and was threatened by Governor Arthur Dobbs with being delivered over to the tribe for retribution. He thereupon fled his newly-acquired lands and moved to South Carolina, remaining there until 1773. During this period he met and married Catharine Lowrance of that state's Union District, and became the father of six children. He may also have lived in Anson County, North Carolina, during this time.

Upon returning to the Catawba Valley in 1773, Perkins and his family lived for a time, according to local tradition, in a tent, where his seventh child was born. At about this time, Perkins apparently exhibited a degree of anti-Revolutionary behavior. He was commanded to appear before

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the Safety Committee of Rowan County in October, 1775, where he gave "such account of his political sentiments relative to American freedom as is satisfactory." Local legend has it, however, that his suspected loyalist leanings earned him the then-derisive nickname "Gentleman."

Perkins's house at Island Ford was probably built between his return in 1773 and his death in 1804; it is said to have been completed about 1790. The house was located on the western bank of the Catawba River, near the present-day Lookout Shoals section of Catawba County. Perkins is described as having owned and bred fine race horses and according to tradition had a racetrack on a nearby island in the Catawba River. One county historian notes that "his mansion house was so located that he could stand on his piazza and look upon his broad acres of rich bottom land . . . and view his race horses make their four miles in the quickest time on the notable race track on the island." By then Perkins' prosperity was clearly established: the census for 1790 credits him with the ownership of thirteen slaves, ranking him among the top five slaveholders in (then) Lincoln County.

Perkins evidently overcame the earlier suspicions surrounding the extent of his devotion to the cause of American independence. The General Assembly of 1776 appointed him one of thirty justices of the peace for Old Rowan County, and the assembly of 1777 named him a commissioner to run the official dividing line between Rowan and Burke counties. It is said that his friends once encouraged him to run for president of the United States. During the last years of his life, Perkins deeded vast tracts of land to his children, who in turn became prosperous and prominent citizens of Catawba, Burke, Lincoln, and Caldwell counties. His son Ephraim Perkins served as state senator from Lincoln County in 1805.

"Gentleman" John Perkins died April 13, 1804. His will devised to his youngest son Eli "one tract of Land that I now live on."

There is some question as to the construction eras of the house and the elaborate mantels and cornices. It is possible that both the house and these elements were done for John Perkins before his death in 1804. Frank Horton of MESDA (who removed the interior elements) believes that the mantels and cornices are original to the house and that both are dated by the "1811" found on the back of the cornice in the large upper room. However, the plain vernacular character of the exterior of the house and of most of its interior finish contrasts so strongly with the elaborateness of these mantels and cornices that it seems likely that the house was built some time before those elements were installed. The date 1811 would seem a likely one for the installation of the mantels and cornices; they strongly resemble the woodwork at Rosedale in Charlotte, which is thought to have been built not long after 1805, and where the woodwork is much more consistent with the overall finish of the house. The house itself--a two-story brick dwelling with a Quaker plan--is typical of many of its era and region. The interiors are utterly unlike any in the area except those at Rosedale. Documentary sources are

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inconclusive and stylistic judgments are necessarily subjective, but it seems reasonable that the plain brick house with its massive chimney may have been that of John Perkins, with the fancy Adamesque work put in for his son, Eli, in 1811.

Eli Perkins died intestate in 1832. His lands were divided by the Lincoln County Court of Equity into seven lots. The lot containing the homeplace was awarded to Eli Perkins's grandson Elisha Perkins (Eli Perkins's son Ephraim died in 1824). The homeplace tract remained in the Perkins family until 1859, when Elisha Perkins sold it to Lewis W. Cockerham and Henry R. Curtis. The property passed through several hands in the late nineteenth and twentieth century.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Research by Robert Topkins, survey specialist; architectural description by Charles Greer Suttlemyre, Jr., survey specialist.  
 Alexander, Nancy. Here Will I Dwell: The Story of Caldwell County. Privately published, 1956.  
 Anson County Records. Anson County Courthouse, Wadesboro, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds).  
 Anson County Records, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).  
 Catawba County Records, Catawba County Courthouse, Newton, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	0 ' ' "	0 ' ' "		35 ° 44 ' 00 "	80 ° 04 ' 24 "	
NF	0 ' ' "	0 ' ' "				
SE	0 ' ' "	0 ' ' "				
SW	0 ' ' "	0 ' ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 9 acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
Survey and Planning Unit

ORGANIZATION: Division of Archives and History DATE: 23 May 1974

STREET AND NUMBER:  
109 East Jones Street

CITY OR TOWN: Raleigh STATE: North Carolina CODE: 37

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name Thornton W. Mitchell

Title Acting Director, Division of Archives and History

Date 23 May 1974

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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Catawba County Records, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).

Clark, Walter, ed. The State Records of North Carolina. 16 volumes, numbered XI-XXVI; Winston and Goldsboro: State of North Carolina, 1895-1906, XXIII, XXIV.

Fries, Adelaide, and others, eds. Record of the Moravians in North Carolina. 11 volumes; Raleigh: North Carolina Historical Commission (Division of Archives and History), 1922-1969, I.

Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1790. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1908.

Lincoln County Records, Lincoln County Courthouse, Lincolnton, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).

Lincoln County Records, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills, Estate Papers).

Preslar, Charles J., Jr., ed. A History of Catawba County. Salisbury: Catawba County Historical Association, 1954.

Saunders, William L., ed. The Colonial Records of North Carolina. 10 volumes; Raleigh: State of North Carolina, 1886-1890, V, X.

Sherrill, William L. Annals of Lincoln County, North Carolina. Baltimore, Maryland: Regional Publishing Company, 1967.

Scott, W. W. "Gentleman" John Perkins. Lenoir, N. C.: The Lenoir News-Topic, n.d.

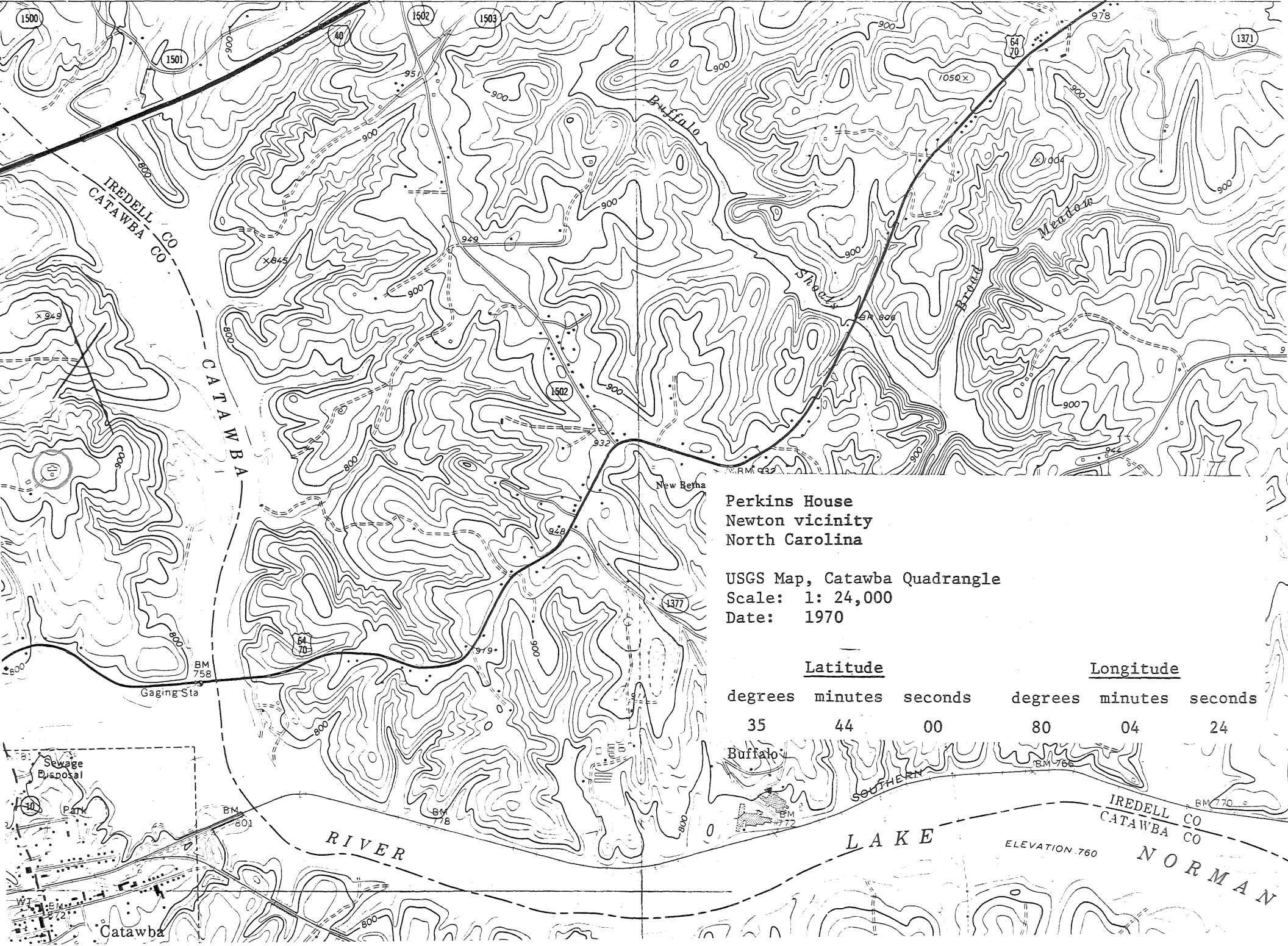
Wheeler, John Hill. Historical Sketches of North Carolina From 1584 to 1851. Baltimore: Regional Publishing Co., 1964.



4755 1 SE (STONY POINT)

WINSTON-SALEM 31 MI STATESVILLE 8 MI.

STATESVILLE 7 MI

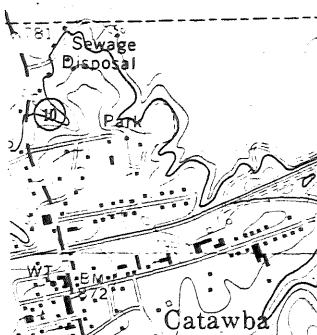


Perkins House  
 Newton vicinity  
 North Carolina

USGS Map, Catawba Quadrangle  
 Scale: 1: 24,000  
 Date: 1970

<u>Latitude</u>			<u>Longitude</u>		
degrees	minutes	seconds	degrees	minutes	seconds
35	44	00	80	04	24

Buffalo



SOUTHERN  
 IREDELL CO  
 CATAWBA CO  
 NORMAN  
 ELEVATION .760

Carlos Rd  
Buck Point Rd

I-40  
MM 139  
I-40  
I-40

CT0003 Perkins House 1974

CATAWBA

Oxford School Rd

CT0262 J. H. Sherrill House



