

# INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR

Catawba County Multiple Resource Nomination

MULTIPLE RESOURCE OR  THEMATIC NOMINATION

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC

Houck's Chapel

AND/OR COMMON

Houck's Chapel

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

S side 9th Ave NW, just W of jct w/ 17th St NW

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Hickory

VICINITY OF

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

North Carolina

037

Catawba

035

## 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 type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<u>N/A</u> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES RESTRICTED	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER cemetery

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Houck's Chapel

STREET & NUMBER

c/o Perry L. Smith (Pastor, Houck's Chapel Baptist Church), 215 14th St. Place NW

CITY TOWN

Hickory

VICINITY OF

STATE

North Carolina

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Register of Deeds Office

STREET & NUMBER

Catawba County Justice Center

CITY TOWN

- Newton

STATE

North Carolina

## 6 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Laura A. W. Phillips, Consultant

Historical Research: Jerry Cross, Research Branch  
Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, N. C.

ORGANIZATION

DATE

June 16, 1983

STREET & NUMBER

637 N. Spring Street

TELEPHONE

919/727-1968

CITY OR TOWN

Winston-Salem

STATE

North Carolina 27101

## 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

Built in 1888, Houck's Chapel in Hickory is a simple frame church typical of many built in piedmont North Carolina during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is surrounded on three sides by a cemetery (now enlarged as a city cemetery) dating from the 1890s to the present.

Houck's Chapel is a small rectangular church--two bays wide and four deep--with stone pier foundation, German siding, and sheet metal-covered gable roof with overhanging eaves and exposed rafter ends. A belfry projects from the north end of the roof, with rectangular wood louvered ventilators on the four sides, a pyramidal roof, and a needle-like spire. Although currently there is only one modern double-leaf entrance on the north side of the church, originally there were two sets of double-leaf, four-panel doors with four-light transoms. The easternmost of these entrances remains intact, exposed on the interior within the added storage rooms but hidden on the exterior by replacement German siding. (The transom of the westernmost entrance also remains.) All windows have four-over-four sash with plain surrounds, a molded drip ledge above the lintel, and louvered wood shutters. The glass in all the windows except those in the rear (south) Sunday school rooms has been spray-painted during the last year (1983). On the rear (south) wall of the church, much of the siding below window level has been replaced with molded weatherboards, but without consistent pattern. The reason for this replacement is unclear. Midway on the east side of the church is a brick stove flue.

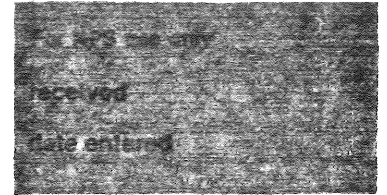
The interior of Houck's Chapel originally consisted of one large room. Around 1975 the interior was remodelled, creating three small rooms across the north end for an office, storage, and a bathroom; Sunday school rooms in the southeast and southwest corners; and a raised pulpit area in the center of the south end, separated from the sanctuary by a low segmental arch. The wood floors remain visible in the Sunday school rooms, but have been recently carpeted elsewhere. The walls were originally sheathed in beaded boarding but have been covered by sheetrock, except in the classrooms and north end rooms. The beaded board ceiling remains exposed. The Gothic-inspired wooden pews and pulpit may be original. The pews feature a cut-out trefoil on each end, while the pulpit has raised panel lancet arches, an overhanging top supported by sawn brackets, and scalloped trim.

A cemetery spreads outward from Houck's Chapel on east, south and west sides. A few stones date from the 1890s and a few from the period between 1900 and 1915. More date from the 1920s and 1930s, but most appear to date from the last fifty years. Fry, Houck (Wilda Evelyn, May 25-September 6, 1925), Sides, Turner, Matherly, Edwards, Day, Freeman, Miller, Moses, Canipe, Setzer, Putnam, Teague, White, Maynard, Bumgardner, Bostian, Brittain, and Gilland are some of the family names found closest to the church. No gravestones of particular artistic merit were recorded. (Note: The mid-twentieth century, city-operated, Fairview Cemetery continues in the blocks south and west of the church, but apparently is not related to the church itself and is therefore not included in the nomination.) In the cemetery surrounding the church are randomly planted oak, maple, cedar, pine, fir, peach and holly trees.

Facing Ninth Avenue on the north, Houck's Chapel is located in the northwest section of Hickory near the city limits. It is in an area of mixed residential, commercial and industrial uses.

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The structure, of course, is closely related to the surrounding environment. Archaeological remains, such as trash pits, wells, and structural remains, which may be present, can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the structure. Information concerning use patterns, social standing and mobility, as well as structure. Information concerning use patterns, social standing and mobility, as well as structural details are often only evident in the archaeological record. Therefore, archaeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the structure. At this time no investigation has been done to discover these remains, but it is probable that they exist, and this should be considered in any development of the property.

**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

\_\_\_\_ NATIONAL

\_\_\_\_ STATE

  X  

\_\_\_\_ 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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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

1888

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Unknown

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Houck's Chapel, erected in 1888, testifies to the enduring strength of Methodist evangelism and the zealous devotion of one minister to carry out his missionary commitment. Born and raised in the last days of the Great Revival and imbued with its evangelistic spirit, the Reverend William K. Houck held a ten day revival in a brush arbor near Hickory in 1887. The next year a chapel was constructed and named in his honor. Though a resident of Morganton, William Houck served the congregation at Hickory for more than half a century, preaching his last sermon in April, 1947, at the age of ninety-two. The congregation dissolved shortly after his death in 1950. Houck's Chapel also represents the fragmentation of the Methodist Church, and others as well, in late nineteenth century Catawba County. As the population grew, new communities formed and the church once serving a wide territory broke into smaller units serving the "pockets" of population. Houck's Chapel, now in the corporate limits of Hickory, nevertheless stands as a reminder of the days when small communities dominated rural North Carolina and when one person could exert a powerful influence in the life of one such community.

## CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

- A. Houck's Chapel was associated with the religious, cultural and civic development and growth of Hickory during the late 19th century, and the first half of the 20th century. It was the "mother" church to several Methodist congregations which broke off from it over the years.
- B. The founder of the Houck's Chapel congregation was the Rev. William K. Houck, who established the congregation in 1887 during a ten-day revival; the church building was erected the next year. Rev. Houck preached at this chapel from its beginning until 1947. The congregation disbanded several years thereafter, but the congregation had fostered several other congregations in the area over the years. Houck's Chapel is associated with many prominent Hickory and Catawba County Methodist families. The chapel is now associated with a Baptist congregation, continuing in its original purpose.

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Between 1870 and 1900 Catawba County experienced a rather steady growth, the population increasing from 10,894 to 19,598.<sup>1</sup> Six municipalities were incorporated: Catawba Station (1872), Conover (1877), Claremont (1893), Maiden (1883), Keeversville (1885), and Berryville (1895, now a part of Hickory). Hickory Tavern underwent substantial growth and passed from a village to a town in 1873. Hickory was designated a city by the State Legislature on March 11, 1889.<sup>2</sup> Numerous post office and crossroads communities appeared on the rural landscape, and Sparkling Catawba Springs, an unincorporated village, was a prime resort spot between 1870 and 1900 attracting visitors from Charleston, Savannah, and other eastern portions of the Carolinas.<sup>3</sup> The manifestation of demographic growth into "pockets" or communities fragmented the religious structure of Catawba County. Where one church had once served a wide area, individual churches rose to serve the needs of the emerging communities. From 1870 to 1900 more than fifty new churches were built, and since most of the communities were rural in nature, Methodism enjoyed a large share of the growth. Methodists, still feeling the energetic strength generated by the Great Revival of antebellum days, constructed twenty-three new churches during the period.<sup>4</sup> One of these was Houck's Chapel, then located about two miles northwest of Hickory.

Founding of Houck's Chapel was primarily through the efforts of the Reverend William Kelly Houck (1855-1950), a native of Caldwell County. Houck moved to Morganton in 1887 and it was there that he was licensed as a Methodist minister. He supplemented his ministerial income by working as a mortician, peace officer, fire chief, and carpenter. He also founded Oak Forest School in Morganton.<sup>5</sup>

Imbued with the missionary zeal of his Methodist faith, William Houck carried his preaching beyond the confines of his residence. In 1887, the same year he received his license, Houck held a revival near Hickory that lasted for ten days. The crowd attending proved too large for the schoolhouse where services were scheduled so an arbor was hastily constructed. The revival was held on the land of J. M. (Monroe) Frye and the next year Frye permitted construction of a frame chapel near the arbor. The structure was named Houck's Chapel in honor of the minister whose effort had inspired its construction.<sup>6</sup> In 1892 Monroe Frye transferred the acre on which the chapel stands to the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The land was donated with two contingents: that it would be used exclusively for preaching the gospel and that the church would be open to the white congregations of all Protestant faiths when not in use by the Methodists. Failure to observe the restrictions would result in the land reverting to Frye or his heirs.<sup>7</sup>

A cemetery was laid out to complement the chapel about the time the latter was constructed.<sup>7</sup> The oldest tombstone dates from 1895, and, interestingly, only one grave is marked with the Houck name. The original cemetery extends around the sides and rear of the building.<sup>8</sup>

Though he remained a resident of Morganton, William Houck, or "Uncle Kelly" as he was called, served as the regular pastor of the chapel at Hickory. It was about a forty mile round trip and a difficult one in the days before good roads and automobiles. By 1927, the effects of circuit riding had taken its toll on the seventy-two year old minister. Ill health forced him to reduce his visits and services

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became less frequent. Yet he continued to preach to his devoted congregation at Houck's Chapel for another twenty years. He delivered his last sermon in April, 1947 at the age of ninety-two. He died in Morganton three years later.<sup>9</sup>

The Reverend W. K. Houck had been the strength behind the small congregation and the force that bound it together. Though in existence at the time of Houck's death, the congregation seems to have dissolved shortly afterwards. The lure of larger and wealthier Methodist churches in Hickory and better transportation facilities pulled the members away from the old chapel. True to the restrictions of the original deed, the structure has continued in religious service. For several years it housed Houck's Chapel Assembly of God and then a Baptist congregation.<sup>10</sup> It is currently being used in connection with the Baptist church.

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FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>John L. Cheney, Jr. (ed.), North Carolina Government 1585-1974 (Raleigh: Department of the Secretary of State, 1975), 1086.

<sup>2</sup>Charles J. Preslar, Jr. (ed.), A History of Catawba County (Salisbury: Catawba County Historical Association, 1954), 337-366, hereinafter cited as Preslar, Catawba County.

<sup>3</sup>William S. Powell, The North Carolina Gazetteer (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 94; and Preslar, Catawba County, 366-370.

<sup>4</sup>Preslar, Catawba County, 116-119.

<sup>5</sup>Hickory Daily Record, June 12, 1950, Houk Obituary, hereinafter cited as Hickory Daily Record; and Edward William Phifer, Jr., Burke: The History of a North Carolina County 1777-1920 (Morganton: Edward William Phifer, Jr., 1977), 135.

<sup>6</sup>Hickory Daily Record, September 11, 1939, and June 12, 1950.

<sup>7</sup>Catawba County Deed Books, Office of the Register of Deeds, Catawba County Courthouse, Newton, Deed Book 45, p. 250.

<sup>8</sup>See notes made on visit to Houk's Chapel on file in Survey and Planning Branch, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as Survey notes.

<sup>9</sup>Hickory Daily Record, April 7, 1947, and June 12, 1950.

<sup>10</sup>Taken from examination of Hickory city directories. See Survey notes.

See continuation sheet.

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

See continuation sheet.

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**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.92 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,7	466660	395550,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C			

B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D			

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property consists of tract 3 in block 2 on Catawba County tax map 104 H, as outlined in red on the accompanying map. It includes the church building and the oldest portion of the cemetery which immediately surrounds the church -- bounded by 9th Ave., 17th St., and 9th Ave. Circle (NW) -- but not the later 20th century sections of the city-operated Fairview Cemetery located south and west of the above described boundaries.



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Lefler, Hugh Talmage and Newsome, Albert Ray. The History of a Southern State:  
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Phifer, Edward William, Jr. Burke: The History of a North Carolina County, 1777-1920.  
Morganton: Edward William Phifer, Jr., 1977.

Powell, William S. The North Carolina Gazetteer. Chapel Hill: The University of  
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County Historical Association, 1954.

Survey notes. Houk's Chapel. Survey and Planning Branch, Division of Archives  
and History, Raleigh.

Joseph Alfred Moretz House

17 468200/3956780

2

Houck's Chapel

17 466660/3955500

Oakwood Historic District

- A 17 468520/3955000
- B 17 469120/3955080
- C 17 469230/3954720
- D 17 468470/3954060

First Presbyterian Church

17 469240/3954440

John A. Lentz House

17 468120/3954580

3

Piedmont Wagon Company

17 467930/3954100

A

B

Claremont Historic District

- A 17 469440/3954930
- B 17 470040/3954930
- C 17 470020/3954170
- D 17 469410/3954190

Clement Geitner House

17 468720/3954140

4

5

6

C

Kenworth Historic District

17 470220/3953600

Elliott-Carnegie Library

17 468780/3954160

Second Street Place Historic District

17 469200/3953960

40 MI. TO LENOIR  
ASHVILLE 75 MI. MORGANTOWN 19 MI.

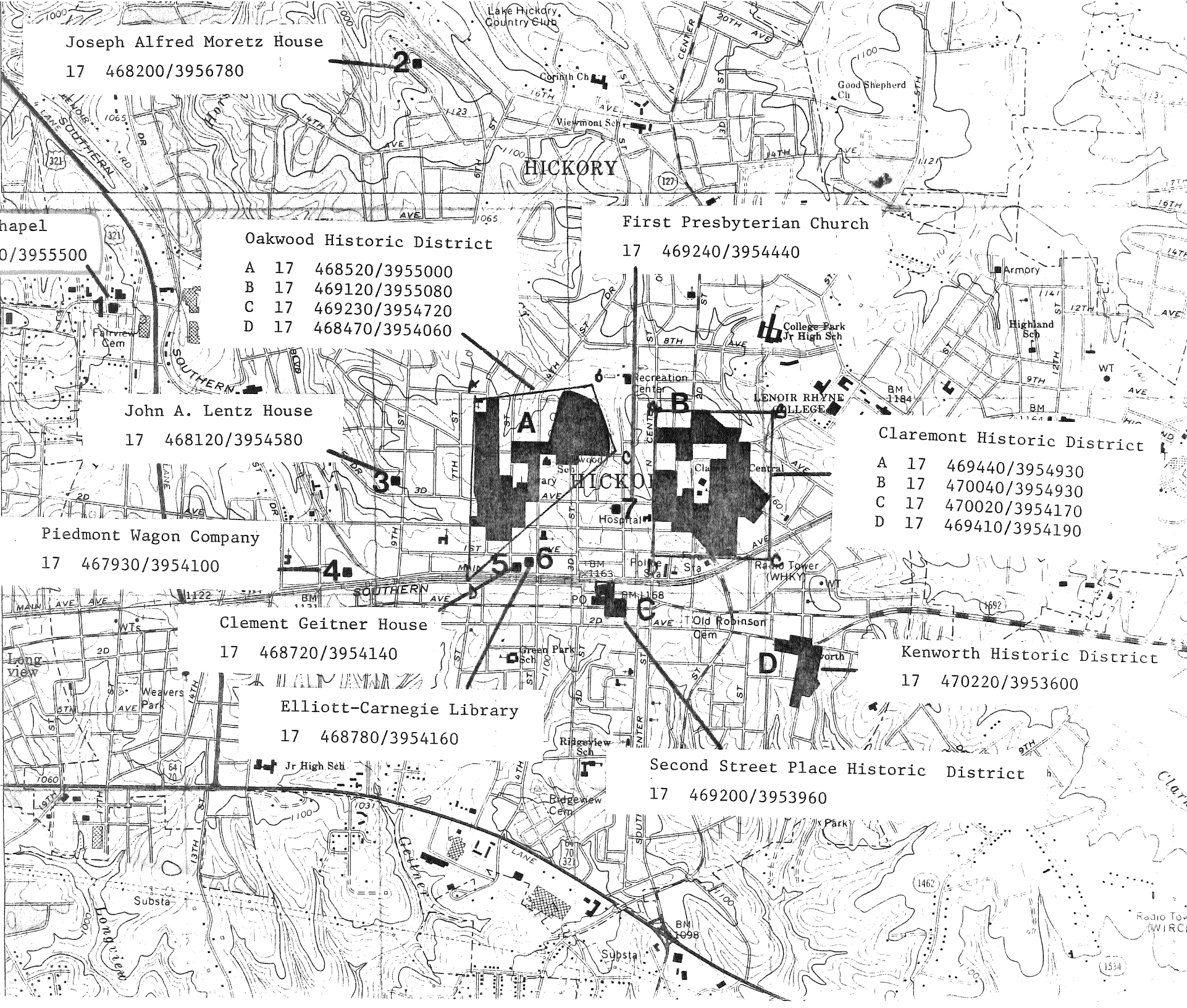
35° 45'

3955

3954

3953

3952



9 TH

A W E N V E

N. W.

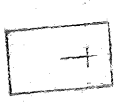
2  
77 ACRES

9A  
2.17 AC

242.51'

205'±

180'



3  
1.92 ACRES

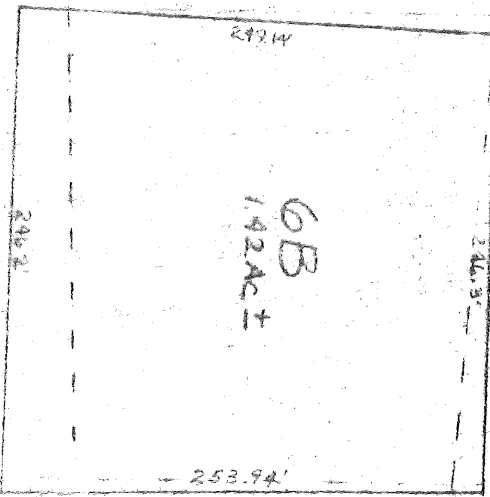
420'

914 AVENUE LOOP NW  
410'±  
190'±  
246.3'

480.48' (326.76')

2

6A  
13.50 AC



6B  
1.92 AC ±

211.95'

253.94'

200'

428'

6

204'±

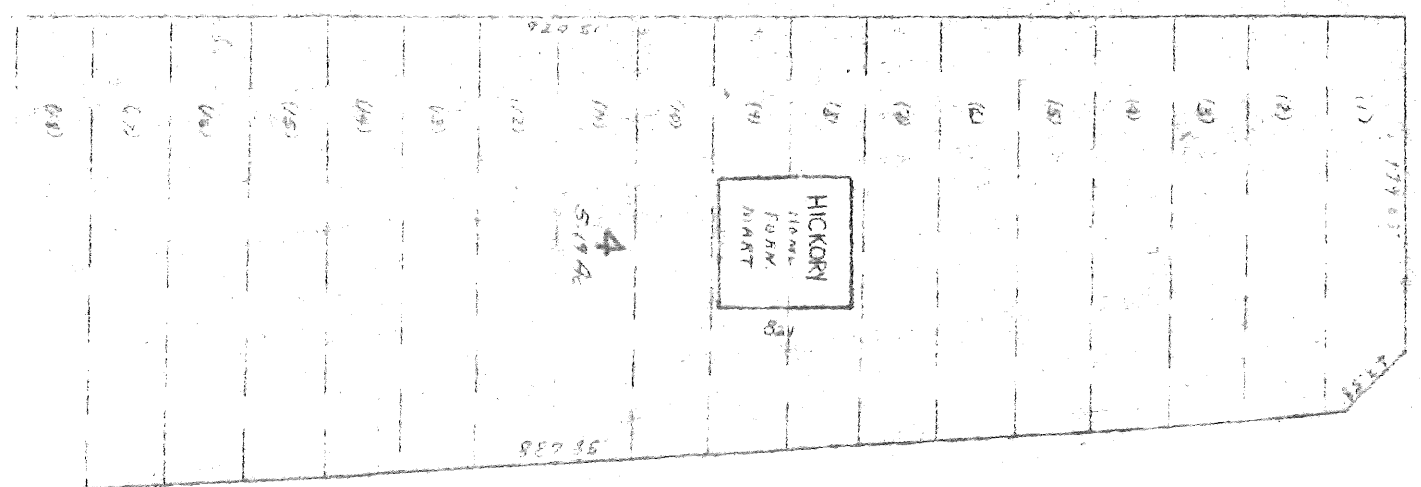
534'

441'±  
(226.44) 240'

17 TH

STREET

N. W.



4  
5.19 AC



P A S S

