

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Wilfong-Wilson Farm  
other names/site number Wilson, Major House

### 2. Location

street & number SE side SR 1145, 0.55 mi. SW of jct. w/ SR 1146  not for publication  
city, town Startown  vicinity  
state North Carolina code NC county Catawba code 035 zip code 28658

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>2</u>	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>5</u>	<u>2</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
Historic & Architectural Resources of Catawba County, N.C.  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

William S. Price, Jr. 4-19-90  
Signature of certifying official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Domestic: single dwelling	Vacant/not in use
Agriculture/Subsistence: storage	Agriculture/Subsistence: storage
Agriculture/Subsistence: animal facility	Agriculture/Subsistence: agricultural field
Agriculture/Subsistence: processing	
Agriculture/Subsistence: agricultural field	

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)	Materials (enter categories from instructions)
Federal	foundation <u>stone</u>
	walls <u>weatherboard</u>
	roof <u>metal</u>
	other <u>wood</u>

**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The Wilfong-Wilson Farm consists of a ca. 1830 Federal style farmhouse, its associated outbuildings and approximately 53 acres of surrounding farmland in west central Catawba County. The picturesque farm consists of rolling hills and wooded ravines. The house and outbuildings sit on a prominent knoll in the center of a cleared area. The house, as the central focal point of the farm, faces roughly northwest on a hill, overlooking pasture lands on the front and rear. Southwest of the house is a huge oak tree and other trees lining a ravine. Northeast of the ravine is a large open field. Although long abandoned, the once-prestigious house remains in relatively sound condition, retaining most of its original sophisticated detailing. The house is accompanied by outbuildings aligned along an axis northeast and southwest of the house -- a log smokehouse, frame corn crib, and stone potato house -- all of which are set on a hilltop in a largely undisturbed idyllic landscape.

The two-story, mortise-and-tenon frame Wilfong-Wilson House ("A" on attached Sketch Map) was originally sheathed in molded siding which appears to have been painted red. Some of this siding remains intact, although much of it has been replaced with weatherboarding, most likely added in the late nineteenth century. The house rests on a stone foundation, infilled in some places with brick. Large stone steps lead to the front and rear porches, which are supported by stone piers. Wood slat cellar ventilators are found beneath the porches, and the entrance to the cellar interrupts the foundation wall on the northeast side of the house behind the chimney. The three-bay-wide Wilfong-Wilson House is covered by a metal-sheathed gable roof with molded rake board and boxed cornice with ogee molding above and smaller-scale Federal molding below. The house is flanked by two chimneys -- a single-shoulder Flemish bond brick chimney with pencilled joints and stone base on the southwest side and a single-shoulder replacement brick chimney on the northeast side. The replacement chimney appears to date from the late nineteenth or early twentieth century.

Symmetrically-arranged fenestration includes, on the first

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Catawba County, N.C.

story, nine-over-six sash windows on the northwest facade and southeast rear elevation, and six-over-four sash windows on the northeast and southwest ends flanking the chimneys. First story windows had shutters, but now only the pintles remain. On the second story, windows on front and rear are six-over-six sash, while those on the chimney ends are four-over-four sash. Four-light casements flank the chimneys in the attic. All windows have a two-faced mitered surround with quarter round molded backband.

Porches are found on both front and rear of the Wilfong-Wilson House, but in both cases appear to be at least partially replaced, possibly in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. The front, northwest, porch shelters the front door and two flanking windows, but does not stretch across the full length of the facade. This porch has a hipped roof, plain square posts and flush boarded walls. The rear, southeast, porch has a shed roof with exposed frame, slender chamfered posts, and wall sheathed in molded siding. Front and rear six-panel doors are identical, with flush, beaded-edged panels, four-light transom, and the same mitered surround as found on the windows.

Attached to the east rear corner of the house is a one-story frame ell, with gable roof, interior northeast corner chimney, large windows and enclosed northeast side porch. It appears to date from the early twentieth century.

Most of the original interior detailing of the Wilfong-Wilson House remains intact, although the hardware is missing and the hall-and-parlor plan has been modified on the first story by the addition of a vertical flush boarded partition creating a center passage. Details are consistent throughout the original two-story portion of the house, and include wide board floors, flush board ceilings, plastered walls with baseboard and molded cornice, six-panel doors (some of which are grained), and three-part door and window surrounds nearly identical to those on the exterior. In addition, the first story rooms have a paneled wainscot, while those on the second story have only a chair rail. The enclosed stair to the second story is entered from the rear of the center passage and rises along the southwest wall of the northeast room. At second story level the stair has a simple, but refined, balustrade with square balusters, square newel with molded cap, and handrail with beaded under-edge and molded cap. The enclosed stair to the attic rises from the south corner of the northeast second story room.

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The decorative highlights of the interior are the two remaining original mantels, both elegant Federal style creations. In the first story northeast room is a handsome tripartite mantel with heavily blocked mantel shelf with underlying diamond band, paneled frieze with carved fan corners and fluted pilaster-like center tablet and outer blocks, and a two-part molded and fluted architrave around the firebox. In the southwest second story room is another impressive Federal style mantel, with blocked mantel shelf, frieze composed of a single large panel with corner fans, fluted pilaster-like blocks on either side of the frieze, and a three-part architrave around the fire box. This mantel retains its marbled and stippled surfaces. The other two mantels, now located in the house of Mrs. Daniel Corriher (a Wilson descendant) in Newton, are as sophisticated as those which remain in the house and are very similar in detail in the intact mantels. These (removed) mantels are distinguished by the use of carved oval sunburst medallions in the frieze panels. They were replaced in the southwest downstairs room and the northeast upstairs room of the Wilfong-Wilson House by simple late nineteenth century mantels with side pilasters, baseblocks, slightly arched frieze and plain mantel shelf.

. The attic of the Wilfong-Wilson House features wide board flooring and pegged rafters with no ridge pole.

The added rear ell is entered from the northeast room via a narrow batten door which was originally a window. The northwest wall of the ell is sheathed in the original exterior molded siding.

Northeast of the house near the edge of the ravine is the **smokehouse** (B, contributing), a small log building with V-notched joints, flush boarded gables, batten door facing the house, and planks covering the interstices of the logs. Though its concrete block foundation suggests that it may have been moved from another location, it appears to be contemporary with the house.

Southwest of the house, beyond the large oak tree and arranged along an old road bed, are the other outbuildings associated with the house. First is the **corn crib**, which appears to be contemporary in age with the house (C, contributing). It is a small frame structure with spaced plank siding, opening on the northwest side, gable roof with braced front overhang, and a concrete pier foundation. An open wagon shed is attached to the

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northeast side of the crib.

Next to the crib is the **potato house**, which also appears to be the approximate age of the house (D, contributing). It is a mortared stone one-story structure with openings at northwest and southeast ends, dirt floor, and gable roof with weatherboarded gables. A shed is attached to the northeast side. It has sawn construction, flush plank siding, and double batten doors opening on the northwest side.

Last in the row of outbuildings, on the southeast side of the roadbed, are the remains of the **log barn** (E, noncontributing). It appears to be contemporary with the house. The second story has collapsed, and the first story is in deteriorated condition. Composed of large, V-notched logs resting on a stone foundation, the barn has a narrow central passage with hollowed out log troughs along either side which are built-in to the end log walls. Window-like openings with small batten doors lead to this passage. What appears to be large feeding stalls flank the central passage. Photographs taken before the second story was removed suggest that it was probably used as a hay loft.

Also on the nominated property, and located on the edge of the open field northeast of the wooded ravine, is a large open **shed** (F, noncontributing) used for hay storage. It consists of a creosote pole frame and a corrugated metal gable roof. The building appears to have been built in the last twenty years.

The 52.8 acres of **farmland** (G, contributing) associated with the farm are a combination of open fields, surrounding the house and outbuildings on a knoll, and wooded areas in ravines to the north and west of the house. The overall appearance is very picturesque.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Agriculture

Period of Significance

ca. 1830-1905

Significant Dates

ca. 1830

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Summary

The **Wilfong-Wilson Farm**, consisting of a circa 1830 Federal style farmhouse and nineteenth century log smokehouse, corncrib, log barn remains, and stone potato house set on fifty-three acres of woodland and pasture, is one of the most intact plantations remaining in Catawba County, and is significant under Criterion A in association with the Historic Context "Agricultural Development in Catawba County: 1820-1939." The two-story frame house is one of the finest examples of the Federal style in the county, with sophisticated mantels, molded cornices, wainscot and graining. Both the house and the vernacular outbuildings are significant under Criterion C in association with the Property Types "Houses of Catawba County: Antebellum," and "Rural Outbuildings of Catawba County." The plantation was the original seat of George Daniel Wilfong and his family. Following his death in 1840 his daughter Catherine and her husband Matthew M. Wilson operated the farm, consisting of over 400 acres by 1850, until their deaths in 1887 and 1888. Their daughter Tulula and her husband William Trott continued to operate the farm until 1905, when they moved to Newton. As is typical of Catawba County agriculture, grain and livestock were major products of the plantation, operated with the aid of a small number of slaves during the antebellum period.

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Wilfong-Wilson House  
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### Historical Background

The Wilfong-Wilson House was built by George Daniel Wilfong about 1830. The house is located near the present community of Startown in the Newton township. For many years the house was the residence of Major Matthew M. Wilson and the seat of his large and prosperous farm.

George Daniel Wilfong (1798-1834) was the son of Peter Wilfong (1775-1841) and the grandson of Major George Wilfong (1740-1818), a major in the Second Regiment of Rowan troops during the Revolution. George Daniel Wilfong married Ann Ramsour (1803-1850) in 1824. They had eight children: Calvin, Julius, Catherine, Jane, George, Adeline, Rebecca, and Elizabeth. Family tradition maintains that the house was seven years in the making and was completed between 1830 and 1835. Wilfong died before 1840 leaving a life estate to his wife for the house and 300 acres. His father Peter Wilfong survived him and lived nearby. The 1840 census shows that Ann Wilfong and Peter Wilfong were the heads of adjacent households and that the former owned 12 slaves and the latter 7 slaves.<sup>1</sup>

In 1847 Catherine Wilfong, one of the children of George and Ann Wilfong, married Matthew Melchizedeck Wilson, the son of Joe and Catherine Robinson Wilson. The Wilsons lived with Mrs. Wilfong and Catherine Wilson obtained the house and land upon the death of her mother in 1850. The 1850 census lists M. M. Wilson as a farmer with real estate valued at \$3,500. He owned 463 acres, 100 of which were under cultivation. He grew crops typical of antebellum Catawba County including 800 bushels of corn, 10 tons of hay, and lesser amounts of oats, wheat, Irish and sweet potatoes, and peas and beans. Wilson owned 530 dollars worth of livestock, including 4 horses, 2 mules, 5 milk cows, 8 other cattle and 50 swine. He owned only one slave but his mother-in-law was credited with ownership of 7 slaves.<sup>2</sup>

Matthew and Catherine Wilson had eight children: Jane, 1848; Anna, 1850; Richard, 1853; George William, 1855; Susan Ella, 1858; Samuel, 1860; Robert, 1864; and TuTula, 1867. By 1860 the Wilson farm was valued at \$7,000 and produced 1,200 bushels of corn. Other figures were comparable to those of 1850. Wilson continued to own a large amount of livestock, valued at \$2,600 and including 9 horses, 9 mules, 8 milk cows, 14 other cattle, 3 sheep, and 22 swine. He owned five slaves.<sup>3</sup>

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At the onset of the Civil War M. M. Wilson helped organize what became Company E of the North Carolina Thirty-Second Regiment. Wilson was named captain of the regiment in August of 1861. He remained in this capacity for about one year, when he resigned. Wilson then returned to Catawba County and continued farming.<sup>4</sup>

The Wilson farm appeared to survive the war in relatively good shape. The 1870 census shows that his real estate was valued at \$4,000 and his livestock at \$900, while by 1880 his real estate was valued at \$8,000 and his considerable livestock at \$700. His livestock included 29 sheep, 40 swine, and 80 poultry. He continued to grow the same crops that he grew before the war: corn, wheat, oats, hay, potatoes, and apples. In 1880 he grew one bale of cotton, the first time this crop appeared on his census listings. Wilson had 125 of 300 acres under cultivation in 1870 and 150 of 300 in 1880.<sup>5</sup>

Catherine Wilson died in 1887 and her husband in 1888. Neither left a will. Their heirs engaged in lengthy legal proceedings before disposing of the estate. The house was occupied for many years by the youngest daughter Tuīūla, her husband William W. Trott, their children, and her unmarried sister Susan Ella Wilson. William Trott was listed in the 1900 census as farmers. In about 1905 the Trotts moved to Newton.<sup>6</sup>

The Wilfong-Wilson House was occupied by tenants for many years. It is presently unoccupied and owned by George Lutz. Much of the surrounding land that comprised the Wilson farm is presently used for grazing purposes.

The Wilfong-Wilson farm was typical of many nineteenth century farms in Catawba County in its variety and self sufficiency. The Wilfong and Wilson families are old and distinguished families in the area and the house is highly representative of antebellum Catawba County.



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Wilfong-Wilson House  
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### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Elizabeth Hoyle Rucker, The Genealogy of Peter Heyl and His descendants, 1100-1936 (Shelby: Zilliecoffer Jenks Thompson, 1936), 133, hereinafter cited as Rucker, The Genealogy of Peter Heyl; William L. Sherrill, Annals of Lincoln County, North Carolina (Charlotte: The Observer Printing House, 1937), 24; (Newton) Observer-Enterprise, April 16, 1954; Lincoln County Estates Papers, George Daniel Wilson; Lincoln County Will Book 2, p. 118; Sixth Census of the United States, 1840, Lincoln County, North Carolina.

<sup>2</sup>Rucker, The Genealogy of Peter Heyl, 384; Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, Catawba County, North Carolina, Agricultural Schedule, Population Schedule, Slave Schedule; Catawba County Deed Book 4, p. 286.

<sup>3</sup>Rucker, The Genealogy of Peter Heyl, 384; Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Agricultural Schedule, Population Schedule, Slave Schedule.

<sup>4</sup>George W. Hahn, The Catawba Soldier of the Civil War (Hickory: Clay Printing Company, 1911), 200.

<sup>5</sup>Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, Catawba County, North Carolina, Agricultural Schedule, Population Schedule; Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Catawba County, North Carolina, Agricultural Schedule, Population Schedule.

<sup>6</sup>Catawba County Estates Papers, Matthew M. Wilson; Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, Catawba County, North Carolina; (Newton) Observer-Enterprise, April 16, 1954; Hickory Daily Record, April 23, 1934; Catawba County Deed Book 41, p. 584; Book 1000, p. 35, Book 1000, p. 400.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Approx. 53 acres

UTM References

A 

1	7
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4	7	3	3	3	5
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3	9	4	4	8	0	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B 

1	7
---	---

4	7	3	1	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	9	4	4	2	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

D 

1	7
---	---

4	7	3	6	5	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	9	4	4	5	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

All of lot 16, block 1, sheet 72-N, Catawba County tax maps.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

Entire parcel remaining which was historically associated with the historic site.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Barbara Kooiman, compiler; Laura A. W. Phillips, description; Jim Sumner, history  
 organization Catawba County Historical Assn., Inc. date \_\_\_\_\_  
 street & number Rt. 1, Box 76 AB telephone 704/256-3040  
 city or town Conover state N.C. zip code 28613

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Wilfong-Wilson House  
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### BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Hahn, George W. The Catawba Soldier of the Civil War. Hickory: Clay Printing Company, 1911.

Hickory Daily Record. April 23, 1934.

Lincoln County Records. Will Books, Estates Papers.

Observer-Enterprise (Newton). April 16, 1954.

Rucker, Elizabeth Hoyle. The Genealogy of Peter Heyl and His Descendants, 1100-1936. Shelby: Zilliecoffer Jenks Thompson, 1936.

Sherrill, William L. Annals of Lincoln County, North Carolina. Charlotte: The Observer Printing House, 1937.

United States Census Office. Sixth Census of the United States, 1940, Lincoln County, North Carolina; Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, Catawba County, North Carolina, Agricultural Schedule, Population Schedule, Slave Schedule; Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Catawba County, North Carolina, Agricultural Schedule, Population Schedule, Slave Schedule; Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, Catawba County, North Carolina, Agricultural Schedule, Population Schedule; Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Catawba County, North Carolina, Agricultural Schedule, Population Schedule; Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, Catawba County, North Carolina. Microfilm copies. Raleigh: Division of Archives and History.

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Section number Photos Page 1 Wilfong-Wilson Farm, Catawba County, NC

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The following pertains to all photographs unless otherwise noted:

- 1) Wilfong-Wilson Farm
  - 2) Startown vicinity, North Carolina
  - 3) Laura Phillips
  - 4) May 1983
  - 5) North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC
- 
- A. 6) House, southwest
  - B. 6) House, west
  - C. 6) House, northeast
  - D. 3) F. Bogue Wallin  
4) October 1979  
6) House, north
  - E. 6) Smokehouse (B), northeast
  - F. 6) Corncrib (C), east
  - G. 6) Potato house (D), southeast
  - H. 6) Barn remains, east
  - I. 6) House interior, second floor southwest room mantel
  - J. 6) House interior, first floor northeast room mantel

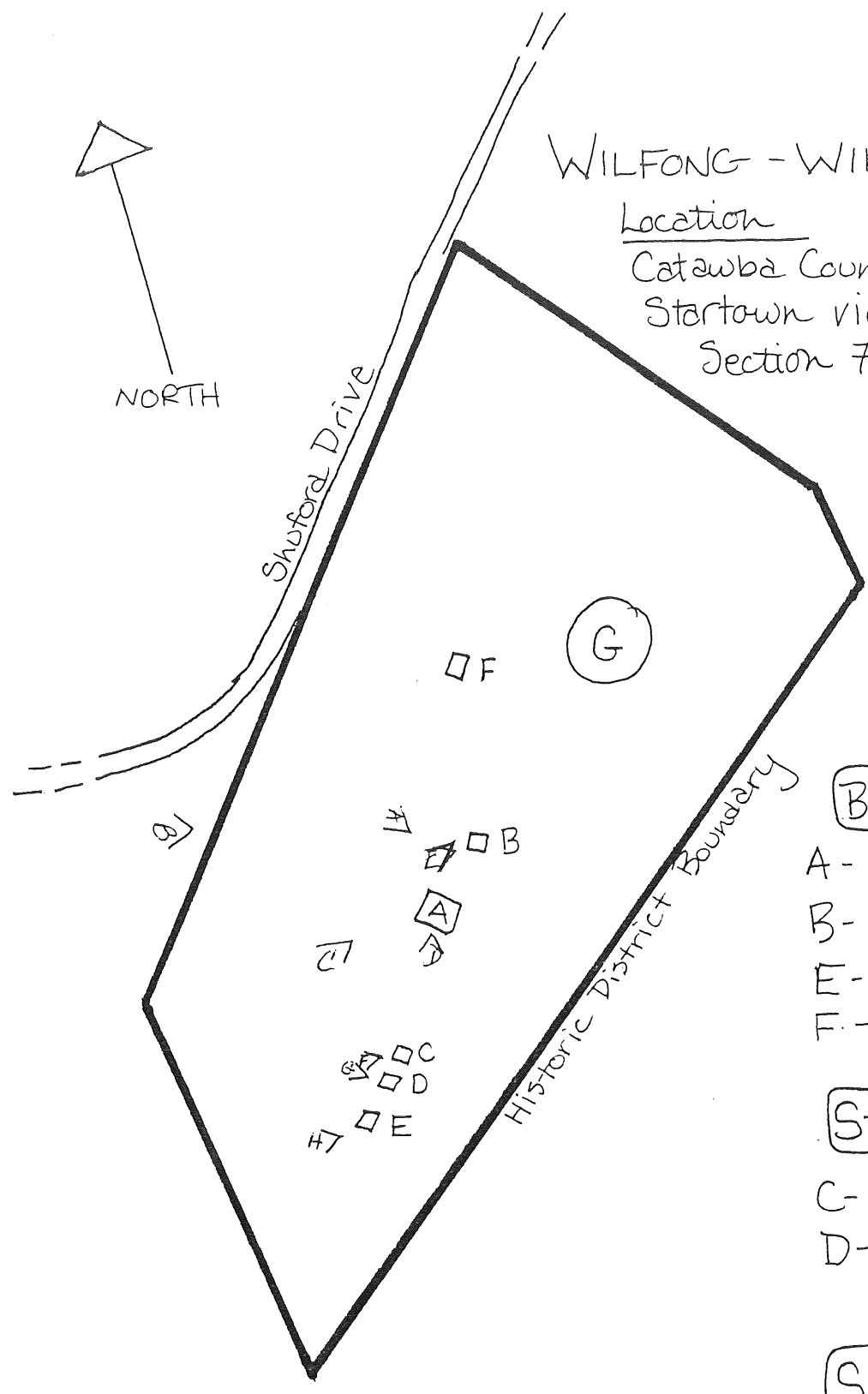
NOTE: One of the photos used in this nomination was taken in 1979 and the rest in 1983. All resources have been thoroughly field checked by Barbara Kooiman in 1989 and have been determined to be unchanged from their appearance and condition portrayed in the photographs.

# WILFONG - WILSON FARM

## Location

Catawba County, N.C.  
Startown vicinity  
Section 72N, Block 1, Lot 16

52.85 acres



### Buildings

- A - Wilfong-Wilson House (C)
- B - Smokehouse (C)
- E - Barn (NC)
- F - Shed (NC)

### Structures

- C - Corncrib (C)
- D - Potato house (C)

### Site

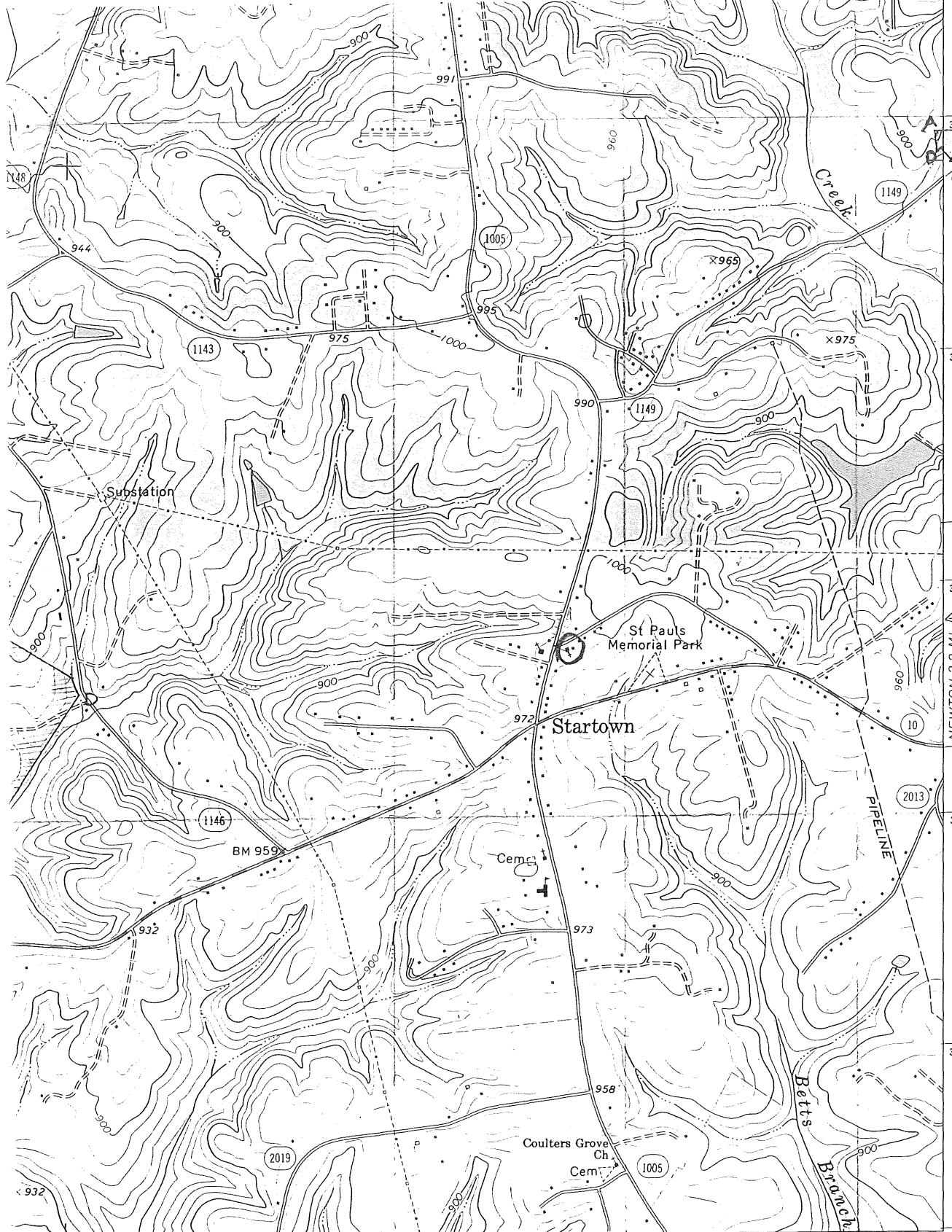
- G - Farmland (C)  
(all acreage inside Historic District Boundary.)

### SCALE

1" = 400'

C = contributing  
NC = noncontributing

(see Newton Quad)



HICKORY QUAD  
ZONE 17  
ST. PAUL'S  
REFORMED CHURCH  
E - 475 740  
N - 3944 720

WILFONG-WILSON  
HOUSE  
A E 473 335  
N 3944 800  
B E 473 120  
N 3944 220  
C E 473 250  
N 3943 925  
D E 473 650  
N 3944 540

3943000m.N.

17°30" 474 475 476 81°15" 35°37'30"

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1973-516-d77/2 477000m.E.

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- Primary highway, hard surface
- Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
- Secondary highway, hard surface
- Unimproved road
- Interstate Route
- U. S. Route
- State Route



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

HICKORY, N. C.  
N3537.5—W8115/7.5

(MAIDEN)  
4755 11 SW

