

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: North Carolina	
COUNTY: Craven	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:  
New Bern Municipal Building

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
United States Post Office

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Pollock at Craven Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
New Bern

STATE North Carolina	CODE 37	COUNTY: Craven	CODE 049
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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"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input 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:  
City of New Bern

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Pollock at Craven

CITY OR TOWN: New Bern	STATE: North Carolina	CODE 37
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
Craven County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:  
302 Broad Street

CITY OR TOWN: New Bern	STATE: North Carolina	CODE 37
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE:

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The New Bern Municipal Building in the Romanesque Revival style, presents a dual facade to the two streets on which it fronts--Pollock Street to the south and Craven Street to the east. The main block of the building is three-and-one-half stories high; to the north is a two-and-one-half-story wing. Both sections are covered with deep hip roofs interrupted on the north and south sides by projecting gables. Rising from the roof at the southeast corner of the main block is a bulky outside tower, square in section with a high pyramidal roof. The seven-bay south facade of the building features a slightly projecting three-bay central pavilion that terminates in a high Tudor gable and is further differentiated by its fenestration; on the six-bay north facade of the wing is a similar gable, but it rises flush with the facade. Small hip-roof dormers of simple design appear on the east and west slopes of the roof. There are also two tall interior chimneys of buff brick.

One of the most striking features of the building is the richness achieved through the use of contrasting colors and textures. The high foundation is of rusticated pink granite, while the first story of the building is of red pressed brick, with virtually invisible string mortar joints--creating a smooth, bright surface. Against the red brick, the shouldered stone arches, window sills, and string courses of stone provide an emphatic accent. The second and third stories of the building (only the second of the wing) are of buff pressed brick, and the heavy surrounds of the windows are of the red brick. The tower is of buff brick, with wide center panels on all four faces of red. The oxidized copper coping along the eaves and gables, introduces still more color.

The focal point of the structure viewed from street level is the square recessed entrance porch, occupying the southeast corner at the first level. It is approached on the south and east sides by sandstone steps leading to an open round arch on each side. Pairs of truncated engaged columns terminating in richly carved acanthus leaf capitals support a wide arch with an archivolt of alternating brick and sandstone outlined by a stone molding resting on acanthus corbel blocks.

The remaining bays at the first level are marked by long trabeated windows surmounted by shouldered arches of stone. Those on the main block are rather widely spaced, but those on the north wing occur in groups joined by linked arches: a group of three on east and west, and three pairs on the north. The first level of the pavilion on the south facade is marked only by three small rectangular windows ascending from east to west, lighting the stair well. The first and second levels of the entire building are emphatically separated by two stone string courses: one occurs at the joining of the red and buff brick (serving as sills for the second-level windows), and another a short distance below. Between these courses, projecting above each of the porch arches, is the front half of a painted copper bear, a gift from Bern, Switzerland (New Bern's namesake) and emblem of both cities. The windows at the second level have pointed-arched heads emphasized by heavy brick surrounds with contrasting key-stones and stone hoodmolds on foliated corbels. On the sides of the main block the central bay is alone; the two end bays on either side are

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coupled with joining surrounds. The two end bays of the south facade are similarly treated, but the second level of the pavilion is differentiated by three much taller windows that begin above a wide band of stone with rinceaux relief ornament flanking the United States shield. The windows rise to the same level as the third story of the rest of the main block. The second level of the wing has tall windows like those of the pavilion, three joined on east and west and three pairs on the north. At the third level the main block has on all sides segmental-arched windows emphasized with brick quoins that extends upward to the dentil cornice. These windows are grouped like those at the second level. The pavilion on the south and the raised gable on the north feature at the level above the normal roofline a band of three rectangular windows framed by a common rusticated surround and, in the gable, a single small narrow window. The apex of each gable, like the apexes of the main roof, is crowned by a delicate scroll finial.

Above the roofline the tower is marked on its three outer faces by very tall, narrow lancet windows with simple hoodmolds. On all four faces at the next level is a clock with an open iron face superimposed over two pairs of louvered lancets. The eaves of the pyramidal tower roof are bracketed and the peak ornamented by a slender copper finial.

The exterior of the structure remains virtually unchanged since the addition of the tower and the interior renovations of 1910-1911, but the interior has been altered somewhat. Some of the rooms on the first and second stories have been completely remodeled, but the basic floor plan, with offices opening off the large hall on each floor, most of the interior trim, and many of the furnishings have been retained. The contrast of the white plaster walls and the rich dark wood trim still dominates throughout the high-ceiling interior.

To the left of the entrance hall, along the south wall, the stair is ornamented with floral brackets in relief. Tall turned balusters carry a heavy ramped handrail. The balustrade is punctuated at each level with posts square in section terminating in fluted domed finials. The newel at the base of the stair is a grandiose piece of furniture in itself, featuring corner colonnettes whose capitals are miniatures of those supporting the entrance arches, and in its upper section, panels with floral relief. The newel cap is a cross-gabled block with palmettes carved in relief. At the second and third levels, the stair well is separated from the hall itself by chamfered plaster pilasters with corbels which support a paneled plaster lintel.

The halls contain flat-paneled wainscots with molded chair rails. Throughout the interior are molded wooden baseboards, wooden doors with six flat panels each and paneled soffits and reveals, and deep molded plaster cornices. The molded window architraves extend to the baseboard, framing a flat-paneled area.

Several of the rooms retain mantels and overmantels of buff brick

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surrounded by molded wooden trim, with narrow molded brick shelves and cut and molded brick cornices bearing foliate relief work. The overmantels are concealed by Eastlake-style mirrors. The combination light fixtures installed in 1911 after completion of the tower (some of which possess alternate gas and electric arms), are still in use throughout the building. On the first floor the safe, manufactured by Diebold Safe and Lock Company of Canton, Ohio, survives complete with a landscape scene painted on the center of the door. Much of the early oak furniture remains, including heavy paneled desks, and marble-topped stands with turned legs, constructed in the Eastlake style.

The court room, located on the north side of the second story retains not only its original trim, but its original furnishings as well. It is entered from the hall through a small paneled alcove. The large space of the court room is articulated by four buttresses projecting from the side walls. A flat-paneled wainscot with molded chair rail continues around the room.

On the buttresses are engaged piers of grouped semicircular shafts with arched corbeled caps. The chair rail carries over the piers in a continuous band. Similar engaged piers with carved leaf capitals flank the doors and windows and support a heavy molded entablature. In addition to the court room furniture, all quite heavy and elaborately carved and paneled, the original chandeliers and wall fixtures remain.

In the hall at the third level between the third and fourth levels, a stair rises in a single flight to an additional suite of offices.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |  |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |  |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

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 type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic               | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____                                    |
| <input 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 structure now used as the New Bern Municipal Building was constructed under the direction of the supervising architect of the United States Treasury to serve as a United States Post Office, Courthouse, and Customs House. The building was authorized by Congress in March, 1889, and the first appropriation was made in August, 1890. The site was purchased from Christ Church (Episcopal) on July 31, 1891.

W. J. Edbrooke, supervising architect of the treasury, noted in his report of 1892 that plans for the building were being prepared. In 1893 the plans were completed, estimates prepared, and working drawings begun. The elevations are signed by Charles E. Kemper, and the drawings of the interior by William Martin Aiken, and they should probably be credited with the design. Construction began in 1895 under a contract let to the company of Grace and Hyde. The following year contracts were let for interior finish, plumbing, and approaches, and in 1897 for heating. The supervising architect's report for 1897 notes that "Since the date of the last report this building has been completed and occupied."

The building was designed without a tower or clock, but as early as April 2, 1895, changes were authorized in the structure, and in June, 1906, a contract was let with King Lumber Company for a new clock. That work was completed in December, 1907, but was not satisfactory, and in the same year additional funds were authorized. A letter from Congressman Charles R. Thomas of New Bern to the Sun, on April 17, 1908, announced the passage of his bill and noted that the funds were for the purpose of "enlarging the clock tower and other improvements."

The supervising architect's report for 1909 notes that "proposals were received for the alteration and repairs but were rejected." A new tower was designed by James Knox Taylor and on July 28 of that year King Lumber Company was again awarded a contract. They began work on the clock tower extension by 1910. With the completion of that tower, and the installation of a Seth Thomas four-face tower clock, the building reached its present form.

In 1936 the present United States Court House, Custom House, and Post Office on Middle Street was completed, and title of the structure at Pollock and Craven streets passed to the city of New Bern. It has served as a municipal building since that time. The bears over the entrance and a large collection of material in the building commemorate the symbols

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of the town, adopted from those of Bern, Switzerland. Although similar to federal buildings constructed elsewhere about the turn of the century, the City Hall stands alone as a Romanesque Revival structure in New Bern. The color and texture of the brick and stone used in the building are unusual for tidewater North Carolina, as is the fineness of the carved stone work. In addition, it exists substantially as constructed, including much of the interior trim, fixtures, and furniture, and continues to exercise its role as a major landmark of the city.

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Government Printing Office, 1911.  
The Sun, (New Bern), April 17, 1908.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Craven County Records, Craven County Courthouse, New Bern, North Carolina, Office of the Register of Deeds (Subgroup: Deeds).  
 Drawings and Records, Supervising Architect, U. S. Treasure, National Archives.  
Report of the Supervising Architect of the United States Treasury.  
 Washington: Government Printing Office, 1890, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1894, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900-1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1907, 1908, 1910.  
Specification and Proposal Sheet for Lighting Fixtures for The United States Post Office, Courthouse and Customhouse at Newbern, N.C. Washington:

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	° ' "	° ' "		35° 06' 16"	77° 02' 26"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 3/4 acre

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

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11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
Survey and Planning Unit Staff

ORGANIZATION: State Department of Archives and History DATE: 14 April 1972

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 H. G. Jones

Title Director, State Department of Archives and History

Date 14 April 1972

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

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

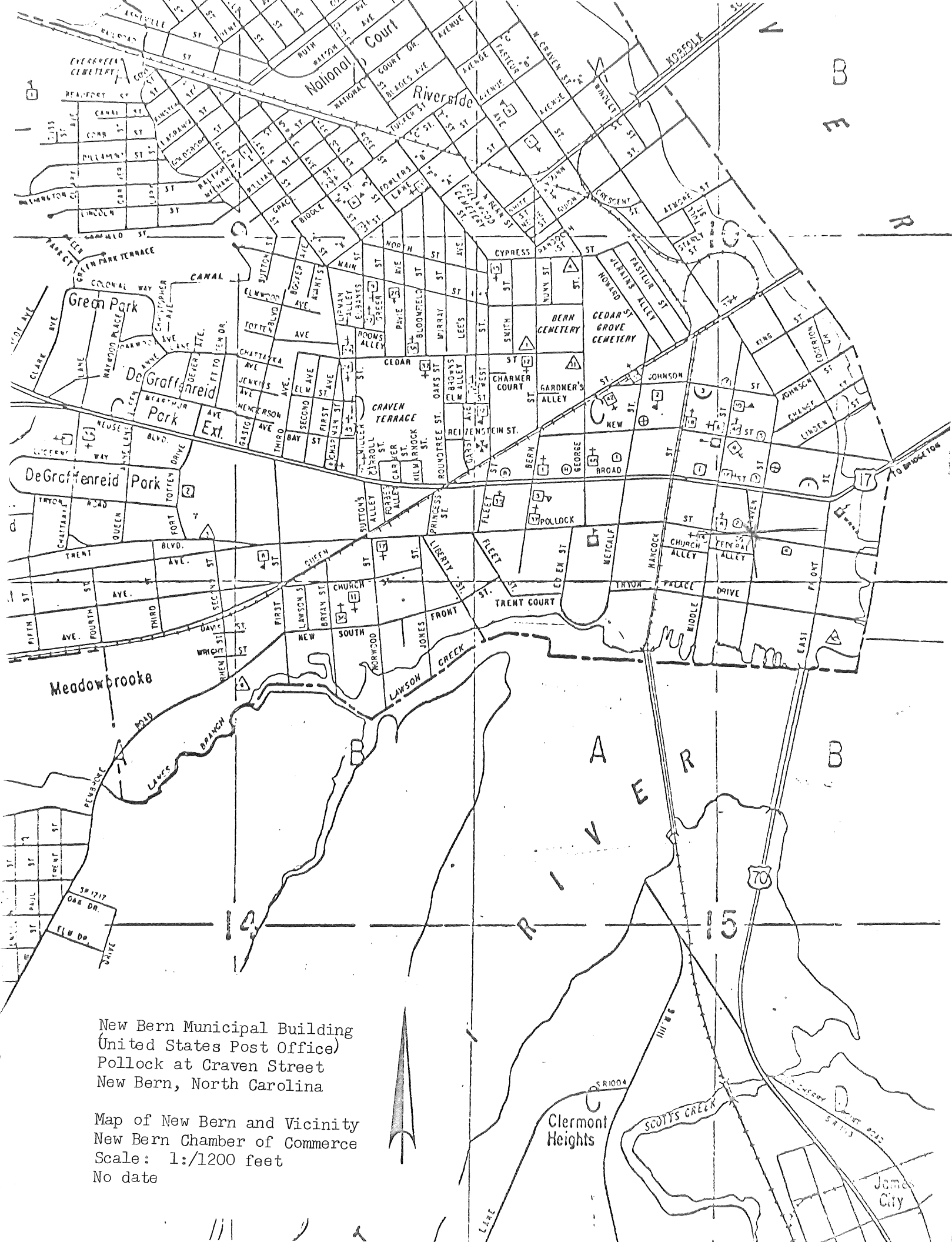
Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_





New Bern Municipal Building  
 (United States Post Office)  
 Pollock at Craven Street  
 New Bern, North Carolina

Map of New Bern and Vicinity  
 New Bern Chamber of Commerce  
 Scale: 1:1200 feet  
 No date



A  
 B  
 C  
 D

Clermont Heights

James City