

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

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

1. NAME

COMMON:
William R. Davie House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Norman Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Halifax

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
Second

THE HON. L. H. FOUNTAIN

STATE:
North Carolina

CODE:
37

COUNTY:
Halifax

CODE:
083

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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	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"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Turner
Mr. and Mrs. W. / Stephenson

STREET AND NUMBER:
Norman Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Halifax

STATE:
North Carolina

CODE:
37

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Halifax County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Halifax

STATE:
North Carolina

CODE:
37

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:
Halifax

STATE:
North Carolina

CODE:
37

STATE: North Carolina

COUNTY: Halifax

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S E E N S T R U C T I O N S

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input 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 William R. Davie House, set in a shaded lot on a side street near the edge of Halifax, is a rather large frame side-hall-plan house two stories high beneath a gable roof. While most of the original house is intact, some exterior and interior alterations have been made, and it is difficult to determine when they occurred; comparison with a pre-1918 photograph indicates some of the exterior alterations.

The dwelling is covered with molded weatherboards and rests on a brick foundation. On the southwest side of the main block is a two-story wing, raised from an earlier one-story wing; to the rear are a number of one-story additions. The front (southeast) facade of the main block is three bays wide, with a double door beneath a four-light transom occupying the southwest bay. The windows in the remaining bays have molded frames and sills and contain nine-over-nine sash; some of the sash in the upper story is probably original, that in the lower, restored to replace plate glass installed before 1918. Beneath each first-story window is an apron with three vertical flat panels, apparently original.

The roofline treatment of this facade is unusual and quite puzzling. A course of small dentils carries across the facade. Above it is a heavy molded cornice adorned with block modillions and terminating in a handsome curvilinear pattern board. The modillion cornice, but not the dentil course, breaks beneath a large central false gable; outlining the gable is an unmolded cornice with similar modillions. The gable is covered with molded weatherboards and in its center is a small rectangular louvered vent with a frame with dentil edges. The date of this gable is uncertain; the pre-1918 photograph shows this feature along with other somewhat Victorian elements, and the ridge of the roof topped with cresting. The then one-story wing also had a steep central gable and ridge cresting; these gables were probably added late in the nineteenth century to give the facade a more up-to-date look. At that time a nearly full-width porch with a hip roof supported by chamfered posts extended across the facade. This has been replaced by a pedimented entrance porch with paired Doric posts and a modillion cornice.

On the gable ends, the dentils recur on the narrow cornice. At the northeast side, windows at both levels flank the two large chimneys but none occurs between. The chimneys are double-shouldered ones of brick laid in common bond. There were formerly two windows at the second level on the southwest side; the rear one is now concealed by the wing. The rear facade, its first story covered by additions, has only two windows at the second level. The modillion and dentil cornice is uninterrupted.

The two-bay wing repeats the cornice treatment as do most of the rear additions--a fairly recent feature. The chimney on its southeast end is rebuilt in Flemish bond. The front shed porch is also a recent construction, as is the alteration of the window nearest the main block into a door.

The interior, which follows a side-hall plan two rooms deep, features transitional Georgian-Federal finish. Most doors are attached with HL hinges and have six panels raised on molded fillets. In the first-floor hall and front parlor appears an impressively robust, symmetrically molded

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chair rail; the baseboards are molded, and a molded cornice is present only in the hall. In the hall is the only major evidence of Victorian period interior embellishment: the ceiling is diagonally sheathed behind a coffering of overlaid symmetrically molded members with roundel blocks at their inter-sections. The elaborate arched head over the front hall window may have been added or given additional ornament at this period. As often occurs in a side-hall-plan house, the hall is divided midway by a transverse arch. This arch is quite deep, with a molded archivolt, gougework keystone, and plastered soffit, and it springs from pairs of simple Doric pilasters. The small roundel blocks atop the pilaster caps are later additions.

The arrangement of the rear hall is unusual for this house type; instead of occupying most of the rear of the hall with a transverse landing and flights on either side, the stair rises along the rear wall, in an initial flight turning in a longer flight back-to-front along the partition wall, ending in a final transverse flight across the hall. The open string is ornamented by wave pattern brackets, and slim turned balusters and posts square in section carry a molded handrail. The spandrel features handsome raised panels. On the first floor, the door to the rear parlor is located beneath the stair, between the pilasters supporting the transverse arch. A short passageway between the hall and the rear parlor has an arched soffit covered with narrow beaded sheathing.

The mantels in the parlors are similar in design, the front one being somewhat larger. Fluted pilasters support a heavy molded dentil cornice that breaks out as pilaster caps, beneath an unbroken plain shelf. Two horizontal raised panels occur in the frieze. Above each window in these rooms is a sort of apron outlined by molding; on those in the front room is a simple applied urn. In the rear parlor and wing room a simple chair rail of Federal profile appears. The mantel in the wing features a beaded architrave and molded backband, above which reeded end blocks flank a single flat frieze panel and support a heavy molded cornice that breaks out as caps over the end blocks. The shelf is plain.

On the second floor the hall is unusually large in proportion to the side chambers, and the plan is somewhat irregular because of the stair arrangement. The mantel in the front room has a molded architrave beneath tall end blocks, two flat panels in the frieze, a molded cornice, and a simple shelf. That in the rear room has a wide molded architrave and backband and a heavy molded cornice beneath a plain (later) shelf. There is no chair rail in this room, but the hall has one similar to that below and the front room a much-simplified version of the same.

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) circa 1783

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The William R. Davie House, an interesting transitional Georgian-Federal town house, was the home during most of his active career of one of North Carolina's most distinguished and influential Federalist leaders, who played a primary role in two of the young state's important early steps: the ratification of the Federal Constitution and the chartering and formation of the University of North Carolina.

William Richardson Davie was born in England on June 22, 1756, (according to his biographer) and as a child came with his family to the Waxhaw region of South Carolina, where his mother's brother, William Richardson, had established himself as a Presbyterian minister. After graduating from the College of New Jersey (later Princeton) in 1776, young William went to Salisbury, North Carolina, to study law under Judge Spruce Macay (who also taught Andrew Jackson). In December, 1777, however, Davie "cast aside his books and took up arms in the cause of freedom," joining a detachment of 1,200 men under Allen Jones of Northampton County--whose daughter Davie would later marry. Davie saw active service alternating with brief periods of returning to the practice of law; he distinguished himself in a number of important engagements and rose to the rank of colonel. When, in 1780, General Nathanael Greene arrived in Charlotte to take over command of the Southern Army from Horatio Gates, the army was suffering from a lack of adequate provisions; there was, Davie wrote, not even "the semblance of arrangement for the support of the army. . . ." Greene, shocked at the "wretched condition" of the troops, pointed out the "absolute necessity" of appointing one man to be in charge of supplying the troops and suggested Davie for the position. At twenty-five, Davie preferred the action of battle but agreed to serve as Greene's commissary general. Despite severe difficulties, he handled the task capably, and at the end of the war his accounts were examined and accepted "with honor to himself and satisfaction to the government."

After the war General William R. Davie married Sarah Jones, the daughter of Allen Jones and niece of Willie Jones, one of the most powerful men in the state, who lived at The Grove, Halifax. Davie bought land in Halifax as early as 1781, and in 1783 purchased from Willie Jones for fifty pounds a parcel of land lying "in the Northwest of the Town of Halifax containing five acres." On this land, and presumably not long after 1783, Davie built the house that now carries his name. It was during the period he lived in his house in Halifax that Davie became one of the most important political leaders in North Carolina. The young state was divided

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politically between the Anti-Federalists of whom a chief leader was Willie Jones, and the Federalists, of whom Davie was a prominent member. At thirty Davie was among North Carolina's delegation to the 1787 Federal Convention in Philadelphia, and in that and the following year campaigned vigorously with his fellow Federalists to have North Carolina ratify the Constitution, in fierce opposition to his neighbor Willie Jones. The Hillsborough Convention of July, 1788, refused to ratify until a bill of rights had been added. The next year the Federalists embarked again on a campaign to have the Constitution ratified, an accomplishment that was reached at a second constitutional convention in Fayetteville November, 1789.

North Carolina's Constitution of 1776 provided for the establishment of schools and "one or more Universities," but it was several years before any action was taken to that end. During the time when Davie was campaigning for ratification of the Federal Constitution, he was also working for the establishment of a university; the Constitution was ratified November 21, 1789, and on December 11, the General Assembly passed the act to establish the university, a measure introduced by Davie. Archibald DeBow Murphy, the early proponent of a state public school system, said in 1827 that "Two individuals . . . were destined . . . to prepare the public mind for the establishment of this University. . . . William R. Davie and Alfred Moore." Davie not only secured the charter for the university: he also did much to arrange sources of financial support for it, and he was on the committee to select a site. An apocryphal but persistent story records that Davie led the group on a hot summer day to relax in the shade of a giant poplar and sip refreshing beverages, after which they were easily persuaded to locate the campus on that spot. The "Davie Poplar," as it is now called, is a landmark of the old quadrangle of the campus at Chapel Hill. Davie's description of the pleasant setting chosen for the university was lyrical: he found it "excelled by few places in the world either for beauty of situation or salubrity of air, [it] promises with all moral certainty, to be a place of growing and permanent importance." He worked zealously to raise funds for the school and on October 12, 1793, assisted by other Masons, Davie, grand master of that fraternity in the state, laid the cornerstone for the first building. On December 1, 1795, he presented a "plan of education" that was modern beyond its time, "characterized by liberalism and progressivism," and combining classicism with utility. Throughout the early years of the university, he was an active, persistent, and innovative member of the board of trustees, concerning himself with and influencing nearly every aspect of the life of the young institution and taking special interest in the construction of new buildings. In 1798 he laid the cornerstone for "Main Building," later South, which was an ambitious undertaking on which progress was slow--it remained half-built until 1814. About 1800 an attack was leveled against the university as a "bulwark of aristocratic Federalism," claiming that the Main Building was an extravagance--"a palace-like erection, which is much too large for usefulness, and might be aptly termed the 'Temple of Folly, planned by the Demi-God Davie.'"

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This anti-Federalist and anti-aristocratic strain, a growing force in North Carolina, was to have a strong impact on Davie's life. In the 1780s and 1790s he was preeminent among the brilliant Federalist political leaders who dominated the state and took some role in national affairs as well. In 1798 he was elected governor by a victorious Federalist assembly. During his term the Jay Treaty and the "X. Y. Z. affair" came to the fore in national politics, and in February, 1799 (following Patrick Henry's refusal), President John Adams chose Governor Davie as an envoy to Paris. When he returned to Halifax in December, 1800, Davie found a state whose political complexion had been drastically altered by the Jeffersonian Republicanism of the "Revolution of 1800." With Thomas Jefferson as president and Nathaniel Macon assuming great power in the state, the aristocratic "arch-Federalist" Davie found conditions "peculiarly gloomy." He served briefly in the difficult position of representing the state in the North Carolina-South Carolina border dispute. In 1802 Davie's wife died; in 1803, after a bitter campaign, he was defeated when he sought election to Congress; and in 1805 he moved to his plantation, "Tivoli," in South Carolina. Even in retirement he continued to take an interest in political affairs and in the affairs of the university he had helped shape. He died in 1820 after five years of failing health.

When Davie moved to South Carolina, he sold to his son, Allen Jones Davie, the five-acre tract of land in Halifax "on which the said William now resides, being the same land he purchased of Willie Jones dec'd. . . ." Allen, who later moved to Mississippi, sold the place to William Drew of Halifax. Drew came into financial difficulties and 1825 sold all his property for debts to the sheriff. Complicated transfers occurred, after which the next owner of the property was Michael Ferrall, an Irish businessman; his estate was administered by Patrick Lynch, bishop of Charleston. The property came next into the hands of Mary Hale and remained in that family until it was purchased by Ann P. Norman, whose daughter, Annie P. Stephenson, and her husband, W. ~~V.~~ Stephenson, now own the house.

Turner

7. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Research and architectural description by Catherine W. Cockshutt, survey supervisor.
 Halifax County Records, Halifax County Courthouse, Halifax, North Carolina, Office of the Register of Deeds (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).
 Halifax County Records, Office of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina, (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).
 Robinson, Blackwell P. William R. Davie. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1957.

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	° ' "	° ' "		36° 19' 44"	77° 35' 47"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1 acre

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: Office of Archives and History DATE: 11 May 1973

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 State Historian/Administrator

Date 11 May 1973

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

 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

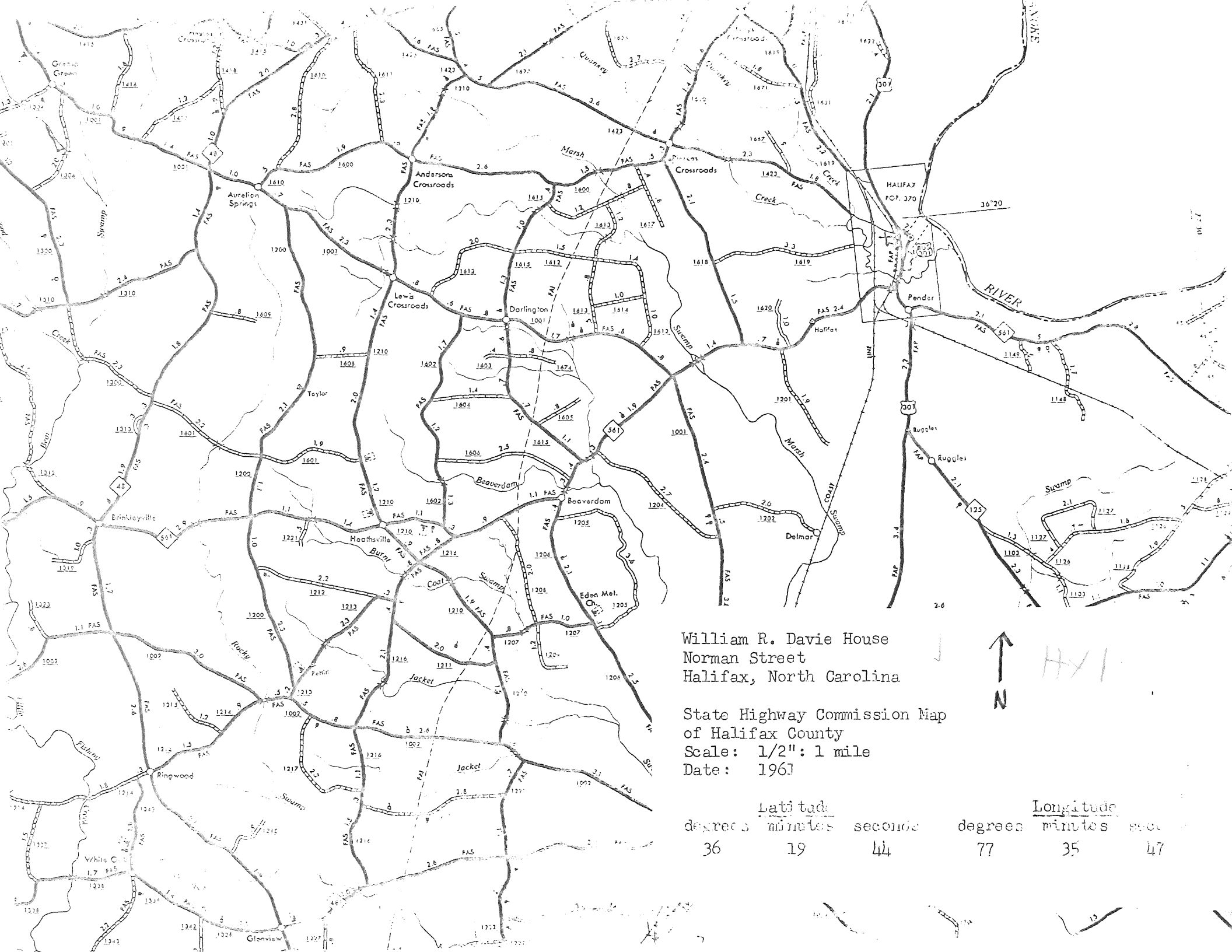
Date _____

ATTEST:

 Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



William R. Davie House
 Norman Street
 Halifax, North Carolina

State Highway Commission Map
 of Halifax County
 Scale: 1/2" : 1 mile
 Date: 1961

Latitude			Longitude		
degrees	minutes	seconds	degrees	minutes	seconds
36	19	44	77	35	47



E 4
WILLIAM R. DAVIE
LIVED HERE. REVOLUTIONARY HERO, MEMBER FEDERAL CONVENTION, GOVERNOR, ENVOY TO FRANCE, "FATHER OF THE UNIVERSITY."

