

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Dr. Joseph Bennett Riddle House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 411 West Union Street not for publication

city, town Morganton N/A vicinity of

state North Carolina code 37 county Burke code 23

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> 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 type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name C. Gary and Patricia Triggs

street & number 411 West Union Street

city, town Morganton N/A vicinity of state North Carolina 28655

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds

street & number Burke County Courthouse, 201 South Green Street

city, town Morganton state North Carolina 28655

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Burke County Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1983-1984  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records North Carolina Division of Archives and History

city, town 13 Veterans Drive, Asheville state North Carolina, 28805

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## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input 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**

The c.1892 Riddle House is an exuberant and well-preserved Queen-Anne home, one of the best examples of that style in the western piedmont town of Morganton, seat of Burke County (N. C.). The house is located on a deep lot on the south side of West Union Street, historically the preeminent neighborhood for Morganton's professional and business upper-class. The street is characterized by many substantial late-Victorian or early-20th century Colonial Revival homes sited on large, well-landscaped lots.

The house is fronted by a small lawn, and bordered on the east by a driveway which leads to an open carport. This carport and an octagonal frame gazebo and pool-side pergola all stand in the large rear yard and are recent additions which incorporate Victorian-era architectural elements compatible to the design of the house. The site is landscaped with a variety of tall deciduous and evergreen trees including oak, willow, fir, and crepe myrtle.

The main block of the 2 1/2-story frame house is a squarish mass topped by a high, asphalt-shingled hip roof. Three gabled bays project from the corners of this core--from either side of the rear, and forward from the facade right. The structure rests on a brick foundation which is hidden from view by latticework skirts below the wraparound porches. Originally, a pair of tall, brick chimneys rose from the sides of the hip roof, but only the west one survives, embellished with a shouldered base and decorative, corbelled-brick top. The form of the house is further enlivened by a number of balconies, bay windows, dormers and a three-story tower added in c.1910.

Most of the exterior surfaces are covered with weatherboard; the corners, floor levels, and angles of the home are articulated with flat trimboards. Exposed rafter ends are visible under the open eaves. The irregular fenestration consists mostly of tall, double-hung, 1/1-sash windows--sometimes paired--enframed by flat casings with molded top edges. A recent three-color paint scheme emphasizes the rich detailing of the house and reportedly follows an early gray-and-white color placement.

The street facade is dominated by the c.1910 tower on the east and a projecting bay on the west. The rectangular tower is relatively unadorned, topped by a high, hip roof and boxed cornice. The projecting bay is fronted by a five-sided bay window which contains windows in which the upper sashes have small-paned borders of colored glass. Above the bay window, paired second-level windows are sheltered under a projecting pent roof supported by large curved brackets. The gable of the projecting bay is embellished by wooden sunburst motifs (a design element which re-occurs throughout the house) surrounding the attic windows.

The center bay of the facade contains the glass-panelled entry door which is decorated with Eastlake-type incised designs and heavy bolection moldings. The entry is sheltered under a projecting porch pediment containing a semi-circular sunburst motif in the tympanum. Above the entry is a balcony which rests on the porch roof and is covered by a shed roof. Elliptically-shaped spindle friezes (reconstructed) span the spaces between the balcony's square posts. Projecting from the roof above the balcony is a gabled

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet      Description      Item number      7      Page      two

dormer which is sided with pressed-metal shingles. A semi-circular sunburst design lies over the paired dormer windows.

A hip-roof porch that wraps around the southeast corner displays some of the house's richest Victorian-era detail including a scroll-bracketed cornice, a spindle frieze (partially reconstructed) and turned posts topped by large arched brackets embellished with incised sunburst motifs. The balustrade consists of twin, parallel, top rails and square-in-section balusters. A side porch on the west elevation has similar, but simpler, detail and has been partially enclosed (c.1920). Also on the west elevation is a dining-room bay window which lies under a truncated-hip roof and has bracketed, clipped corners. A balcony above this bay window features a hip roof supported on large, semi-elliptical braces enlivened with spindlework, as are the balcony rail and cornice.

The wraparound porch, already described, runs the length of the east elevation and has been partially enclosed on the south bay. The rear of the house has several ells including the original, one-story, gabled kitchen ell projecting from the western end, and a cross-gabled, one-story ell running parallel to the main mass of the house. A shed-roofed rear porch fronts both these ells, but has been completely enclosed since c.1966. The foundation-level space beneath this porch has also been enclosed and filled with Queen-Anne-era windows salvaged from neighboring houses. A modern, elevated, open deck projecting from the kitchen ell also utilizes salvaged Victorian-era details in a compatible manner.

The interior follows an irregular floor plan and retains most of the original fabric. The rooms are characterized by high ceilings, plaster walls, and oak floors. Most of the primary spaces are finished with wide baseboards trimmed with complex applied moldings, and door and window surrounds consisting of wide, symmetrical moldings with corner blocks and pateras. The interior doors have twin upper and lower recessed panels separated by a wide central panel; the panels have chamfered side edges and molded top edges.

The entry opens to a large main parlor which features a four-foot-high, beaded-tongue-and-groove wainscot, crown molding, and a boxed ceiling beam which delineates the space into the original parlor and the first stairway hall which became part of the present parlor when the original stair was relocated circa 1910. The west parlor is the most elaborate, highlighted by a built-in bay-window seat (partially rebuilt) with a spindle-work skirt, and an exquisite fireplace mantel, typically Victorian in its ornament.

It features paired, turned pilasters topped by reeded consoles, a panelled frieze, a three-faced opening and an embossed cast-iron coal grate. Four other mantels survive--the dining room, den, and second-floor bedrooms--and are similar to the one in the parlor but with variations in the designs of the pilasters, consoles, grates, and trim.

The dining room is accessible from the west parlor through a wide opening serviced by pocket-doors. A recessed, built-in cabinet, trimmed with Eastlake detail, runs the rear wall of this room. Between the dining room and den, and occupying a small hall space is the narrow 180 degree-turn stairway featuring a simple newel

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet    Description    Item number    7    Page    three

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post topped by a round finial. The stair leads to the second floor consisting of three bedrooms and a bathroom arranged around a narrow central hall. These rooms are generally trimmed in a manner similar to those downstairs, although in a more restrained manner. The interiors of the rear ells and additions of the house have been completely modernized and include a kitchen and recreational spaces.

## 8. Significance

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 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** built c.1892 **Builder/Architect** unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The c.1892 Dr. Joseph Bennett Riddle House is an excellent example of the Queen Anne style, prominently sited on a large lot on West Union Street, historically the preeminent residential neighborhood of the western piedmont town of Morganton, seat of Burke County (N. C.). It is the most ornate and substantial example remaining of the many Victorian-era homes built on the street by the town's professional class during the 1890s. The house is associated with Dr. Joseph Bennett Riddle, prominent local physician and surgeon who was long connected with Grace Hospital of Morganton.

### Criteria Assessment:

- B. Associated with Dr. Joseph Bennett Riddle (1870-1947), a prominent local physician and surgeon, county coroner, and chief-of-staff of Grace Hospital in Morganton, North Carolina.
- C. Embodies the most ornate and substantial example of the Queen Anne style on West Union Street, historically the preeminent neighborhood of Morganton's professional and business class.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet      Significance      Item number      8      Page      two

The Riddle House is associated with Dr. Joseph Bennett Riddle (1870-1947), prominent Morganton physician and first local surgeon in Burke County, (N. C.). Riddle was born in mountainous Yancey County (N. C.) on September 17, 1870 to Samuel and Mary Naomi (Rust) Riddle who lived in the small rural town of Pensacola near the county seat of Burnsville.<sup>1</sup> Riddle's father Samuel (1838-1923) was the son of Benjamin and Rachel (Austin) Riddle and grandson of John Riddle.<sup>2</sup> Samuel lost a leg at the battle of Kenesaw Mountain (Ga.) during the Civil War, and was later a teacher, Register of Deeds, and County Treasurer in Yancey County.<sup>3</sup> Joseph Riddle's mother, Mary (1843-1930), was the daughter of Joseph Rutherford (1817-1899) and Sarah Ann McCall (1821-1912) Rust of Bridgewater, Burke County, and a descendant of Peter Rust (1752-?), an early pioneer settler of Burke.<sup>4</sup> Mary was a teacher as well as a spinner and weaver of silk who learned this skill from her mother who provided the inauguration dress for the wife of Zebulon Vance, North Carolina governor during the Civil War.<sup>5</sup>

Joseph Riddle received his early education at Jack's Creek Academy (also called Peterson Academy) in Yancey County, as did his future wife Leonora Jane Ray.<sup>6</sup> His advanced education included two years at Washington College in Greenville, Tennessee, Baltimore Medical School in Maryland, and Vanderbilt University (Tenn.) where he studied under Drs. Whiteside and Greer and graduated with a medical degree in 1898.<sup>7</sup> In the same year, on June 30, he married Leonora Jane Ray and established a practice in Bridgewater, his mother's hometown.<sup>8</sup> Leonora Ray (1883-1947) was the daughter of Baxter B. and Martha Ray of Yancey County.<sup>9</sup> Riddle traveled on foot or horseback to his patients and his fee was commonly fifty cents. He went back to medical school, studying surgery under Dr. Stewart McGuire of Richmond Medical School (Va.), graduating in 1907.<sup>10</sup> In that same year, he moved his family back to Burke County, locating in Morganton to be near the recently-established Grace Hospital.

Grace Hospital had been founded by Archdeacon Walter Hughson (of Grace Episcopal Church, Morganton) the year before (1906) initially to serve the medical needs of the county's poor, but soon expanded to provide services for all the county's residents.<sup>11</sup> Riddle joined the staff in 1907, and along with Dr. Edward W. Phifer, were the only doctors associated with the hospital until 1918.<sup>12</sup> Riddle carried out a hospital-oriented practice, seeing patients at the hospital or at his home on West Union Street. He purchased this residence (the nominated property) in 1904 for \$3300 from a Louisa N. Bond who was most likely the first owner.<sup>13</sup> Bond was an unmarried woman, originally from Kinston, N. C. (Lenoir County) where her parents, Henry and Sarah H. Bond, were farmers.<sup>14</sup> Although there is a lack of written documentation, it is probable that she had the house built c.1892 when she purchased a lot on West Union Street, Morganton's preeminent residential neighborhood for the professional and business class.<sup>15</sup> The house was one of numerous, substantial Queen Anne-style residences on the street, and survives today in largely original condition except for the addition of a tower by Dr. Riddle in the early-20th century.<sup>16</sup>

Dr. Riddle was a large man--6'2" tall and weighing 235 pounds--and was rarely ill, although he suffered a nearly fatal auto-related accident in 1917 when he lay pinned beneath his car for two hours.<sup>17</sup> He recovered however, and continued his practice at

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Significance

Item number

8

Page three

Grace Hospital. In 1922-26, he served as County Coroner, and was also a consulting surgeon for the North Carolina Insane Asylum, located in Morganton.<sup>18</sup> In 1929, Grace Hospital greatly expanded its physical facilities on King Street and increased its medical capabilities under chief-of-staff, Dr. Edward Phifer.<sup>19</sup> After Phifer's death, Riddle filled that position in 1940, 1943 and 1945. In addition to these duties, he was president of the county medical association, and a senior deacon at the First Baptist Church of Morganton.<sup>20</sup> He continued an active medical practice until his last years when he fell ill and remained an invalid in a downstairs room at his house until his death on New Year's Day, 1947 at age 76.<sup>21</sup>

Mrs. Riddle died within a few months of her husband (May, 1947) and the house was inherited by the second child, Joseph Bennett II (1902-1948) who also died shortly thereafter.<sup>22</sup> His widow, Evielyn Hilsman (James) Riddle possessed the home, along with her second husband William Martin, until 1958 when it was sold to a Charles G. Anderson.<sup>23</sup> Throughout the 1960s, it was used as a boardinghouse and suffered a period of deterioration until the present owner, C. Gary Triggs, bought it in 1973 and undertook an extensive restoration of the property, including the replacement of some architectural elements which had been removed.<sup>24</sup> The restoration of the Riddle House served as a catalyst for other restorations and a renewed interest for the older homes on West Union Street.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet significance Item number 8 Page four

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>"Dr. J. B. Riddle, Well Known Physician, Died Wednesday", Morganton News-Herald Jan. 3, 1947, p. 4. Also: interivew with Myra Riddle, Morganton, N. C., on August 6, 1984.

<sup>2</sup>The Heritage of Burke County. pub. by the Burke County Historical Society (Winston-Salem: Hunter Pub., 1981), p. 381.

<sup>3</sup>Heritage, p. 381.

<sup>4</sup>Heritage, p. 381; also News-Herald, January 3, 1947, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup>Eunice Ervin, scrapbook (owned by John W. Ervin, Morganton), p. 35.

<sup>6</sup>Heritage, p. 372; also News-Herald, Jan. 3, 1947, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup>News-Herald, Jan. 3, 1947, p. 4; Heritage, p. 372; also Edward W. Phifer, Burke, The History of a North Carolina County. (Morganton: pub. by author, 1977), p. 123.

<sup>8</sup>Heritage p. 372; Burke, p. 123.

<sup>9</sup>Heritage p. 372.

<sup>10</sup>Heritage, p. 372; News-Herald, Jan. 3, 1947, p. 4.

<sup>11</sup>Burke, p. 125.

<sup>12</sup>News-Hearld, May 28, 1959, n.p.

<sup>13</sup>Burke County Deed Bk. D-3, p. 514 (1904).

<sup>14</sup>Burke County Death Records, Index to vital statistics 1913-45., Vol 5, p.180. Bond died at age 80 on July 24, 1919; also 1850 census for Lenoir Co., on microfilm at Lenoir Comm. College.

<sup>15</sup>Burke County Deed Book V, p. 274 indicates Bond bought the property for \$300 from T. G. (?) Walton on May 21, 1892.

<sup>16</sup>See photo, Heritage, p. 50; also photo of Riddle House in Photograph heading, vertical file in N. C. Room, Morganton Public Library; from collection of Dr. I. M. Taylor.

<sup>17</sup>Heritage, p. 372.

<sup>18</sup>Burke, p. 425; Heritage, p. 372.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet    Significance    Item number    8    Page five

---

<sup>19</sup> News-Herald, Aug. 1, 1929, n.p..

<sup>20</sup> Heritage, p. 372; News Herald, Jan. 3, 1947, p.1.

<sup>21</sup> News-Herald, Jan. 3, 1947, p.1; Heritage, p. 372.

<sup>22</sup> Heritage, p. 372.

<sup>23</sup> Burke Co. Deed Bk. 185, p. 138, Oct. 15, 1958.

<sup>24</sup> Burke County Deed Bk. 244, p. 191 (Anderson to Leonhardt);  
Bk. 451, p. 609 (Leonhardt to Triggs).

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .78

Quadrangle name Morganton South, N. C.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A	<u>1</u> <u>7</u>	<u>4</u> <u>3</u> <u>7</u> <u>2</u> <u>8</u> <u>5</u>	<u>3</u> <u>9</u> <u>5</u> <u>5</u> <u>1</u> <u>2</u> <u>5</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

D			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

E			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

F			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

G			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

H			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

**Verbal boundary description and justification** The nomination includes the lot defined as Lot #6, Block #1, Map #46-18 in the Burke County Tax Supervisor's Office, approximately 72' x 369' x 120' x 341' and includes the house, garage and in-ground swimming pool; see map.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title James Randall Cotton, Preservation Consultant

organization N. C. Division of Archives and History date July 30, 1984

street & number 13 Veterans Drive telephone (704) 298-5024

city or town Asheville state North Carolina, 28805

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature \_\_\_\_\_

title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

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

date \_\_\_\_\_

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Burke County Records: Deed Books, D-3 (p. 514), V (p.274), 185 (p.138), 244 (p.191), 451 (p. 609); Index to Vital Statistics, Deaths 1913-45 (Vol. 5, p. 180); Tax Map, #46-18.

Ervin, Eunice, scrapbook in possession of John W. Ervin, Morganton, N. C.

The Heritage of Burke County. pub. by Burke Co. Historical Society (Winston-Salem: Hunter, 1977).

Interviews: Myra Riddle, Morganton, August 6, 1984.

Lenoir County (N. C. ), 1850 Census. (on microfilm at Lenoir Community College).

Morganton News-Herald: Jan. 3, 1947; May 28, 1959; May 13, 1920; Aug. 1, 1929.

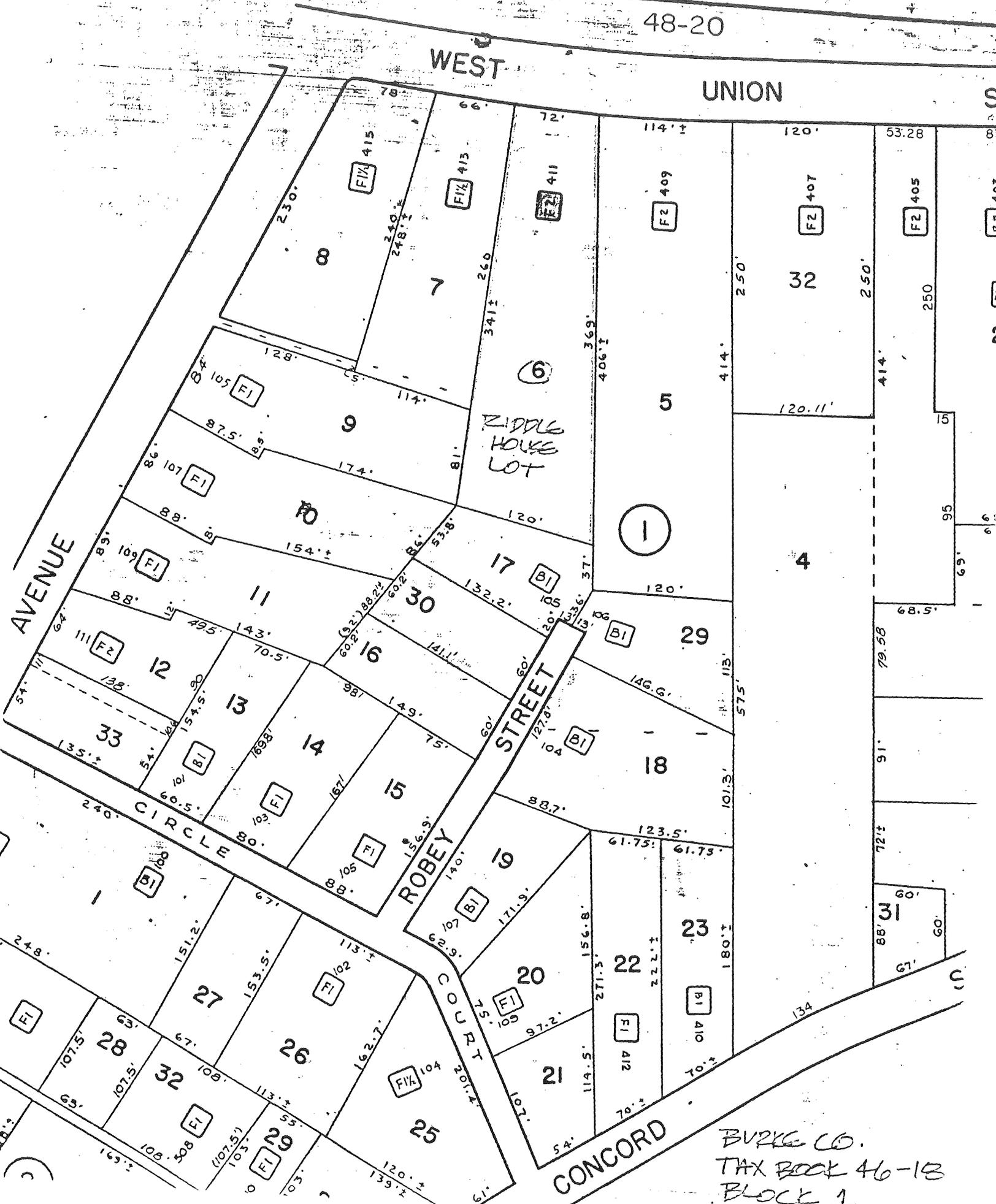
Phifer, Edward W. Burke, The History of A North Carolina County. (pub. by author, 1977).

Photographs: see Photograph vertical file at N. C. Room of Morganton Public Library.

48-20

WEST

UNION



BURKE CO.  
 TAX BOOK 46-18  
 BLOCK 1  
 LOT 6

