**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

**1. NAME**

**COMMON:**
Camden County Courthouse

**AND/OR HISTORIC:**

**2. LOCATION**

**STREET AND NUMBER:**

**CITY OR TOWN:**
Camden (First Congressional District, The Hon. Walter B. Jones)

**STATE:**
North Carolina

**CODE:**
37

**COUNTY:**
Camden

**CODE:**
029

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY (Check One)</th>
<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
<th>STATUSES</th>
<th>ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
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<tr>
<td>Site</td>
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<td>Unrestricted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Preservation work in progress No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Object</td>
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**PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate):**

- Agricultural
- Government
- Park
- Transportation
- Comments
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Private Residence
- Other (Specify)
- Educational
- Military
- Religious
- Entertainment
- Museum
- Scientific

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

**OWNER'S NAME:**
County of Camden

**STREET AND NUMBER:**
Highway 313

**CITY OR TOWN:**
Camden

**STATE:**
North Carolina

**CODE:**
37

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

**COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:**
Camden County Courthouse

**STREET AND NUMBER:**
Highway 313

**CITY OR TOWN:**
Camden

**STATE:**
North Carolina

**CODE:**
37

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

**TITLE OF SURVEY:**

**DATE OF SURVEY:**

**DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:**

**STREET AND NUMBER:**

**CITY OR TOWN:**

**STATE:**

**CODE:**
The Camden County Courthouse is a small brick building with the main floor expressed as a piano nobile above a high raised basement. The structure is covered by a hip roof. The five-bay main (east) facade and the four-bay north and south sides (those walls which can be seen from the road in front of the courthouse) are laid in Flemish bond while the rear of the building is constructed in a less attractive random bond.

Each side of the building contains four large windows with twelve-over-twelve sash at both levels, those at the basement level being much smaller than the ones above. All have heavy stone lintels and sills. Dominating the main facade is a well-executed tetrastyle pedimented portico which extends over the central entrance and the two flanking bays. The heavy tapered Doric columns, of molded brick covered with a thin coat of stucco, are set on high brick piers that support the porch floor. The rear of the portico rests on brick pilasters which rise from the ground and feature molded brick caps. The portico is enclosed by an unusual stone handrail with a later iron balustrade below it. The main level is reached by steps at either end, each rising in two flights that intersect at right angles separated by a wide landing. The tympanum of the portico is filled with horizontal flush siding and contains a small wooden plaque bearing the date 1847. A heavy unadorned wooden frieze carries around the porch and is repeated in brick on the main block, a device that effectively links the two elements. The smaller basement entrance is located beneath the main door in the loggia under the portico.

The floor plan of the courthouse remains essentially unchanged. The basement level has a center hall with two rooms on either side which serve as offices for county officials. Although some alterations have been accomplished in the southeast vault room, most of the early trim is still intact. Each room has plain plaster walls accented only by a heavy baseboard. The windows are set in deep splayed reveals and, like the doors, are framed by symmetrically molded architraves with corner blocks adorned with roundels. Although similar, the architraves differ slightly in each room. The main floor, finished similarly, is one large courtroom with later partitions added in the northwest and southwest corners to house bathrooms and judge's chambers. Along the center of the west wall, enclosed by a heavy Victorian turned balustrade, is the judge's bench and the jury section. Rows of slant-back benches, facing the judge's bench, extend away from this section back to the main entrance.
Camden County, formed in 1777 from part of Pasquotank County, was named for Sir Charles Pratt, first Earl of Camden. Camden was thus honored because, in addition to having been a distinguished English judge and statesman, he had gained popularity among the American colonists for his opposition to heavy colonial taxation. This led to his removal as lord high chancellor in 1770 by Lord North's ministry. The county seat of Camden County was originally called Jonesboro after two brothers named Jones who are said to have served on the committee to select a site for a courthouse. The name of the village was later changed to Camden.

In 1782 a tract of one and one quarter acres was purchased from Thomas Sawyer and his mother, Margaret, to serve as a site for the courthouse. The courthouse which was built on this land burned about 1846. The present courthouse, which has the date, 1847, in the pediment of the main front, was constructed apparently in that year to replace the earlier building. It has served that purpose continuously ever since.

The Camden County Courthouse is a modest structure appropriate to a small county. Yet the dominating pedimented porch, the large windows, the simple, heavy architectural elements, and the consistent sense of proportion and scale throughout give to the building a dignity and monumentality seldom found in such small Greek Revival buildings.
### 9. Major Bibliographical References

Camden County Records, Camden County Courthouse, Camden, North Carolina, Office of the Register of Deeds. (Subgroups: Deeds, Court Records).

Camden County Records, State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, Court Records).

"Camden County," The State, November 29, 1941.


### 10. Geographical Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corner</th>
<th>Latitude</th>
<th>Longitude</th>
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<td>SW</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
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**Approximate Acreage of Nominated Property:** One and one quarter acre.

**List All States and Counties for Properties Overlapping State or County Boundaries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Code</th>
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### 11. Form Prepared By

**Name and Title:**
Survey and Planning Unit Staff, John B. Wells, III, Supervisor

**Organization:** State Department of Archives and History

**Date:** November 1, 1971

**Street and Number:** 109 East Jones Street

**City or Town:** Raleigh

**State:** North Carolina

### 12. State Liaison Officer Certification

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 [x]

**Name:** H. G. Jones

**Title:** Director, State Department of Archives and History

**Date:** November 1, 1971

### National Register Verification

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:**