NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

1. NAME
COMMON:
Milford
AND/OR HISTORIC:
Relief-Orice-Sawyer House

2. LOCATION
STREET AND NUMBER:
West side of SR 1205, .5 miles south of junction with Highway 343
CITY OR TOWN:
Camden (First Congressional District, the Hon. Walter B. Jones)

3. CLASSIFICATION
CATEGORY (Check One)
☐ District ☑ Building ☐ Site ☐ Structure ☐ Object

OWNERSHIP
☐ Public ☐ Private ☐ Both

STATUS
☐ Occupied ☐ Unoccupied ☐ Being Considered

ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
☐ Yes: ☑ Restricted ☐ Unrestricted ☐ No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate):
☐ Agricultural ☑ Government ☐ Park ☐ Transportation ☐ Comments
☐ Commercial ☑ Industrial ☑ Private Residence ☑ Other (Specify)
☐ Educational ☑ Military ☑ Religious ☑ Scientific

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY
OWNER'S NAME:
William K. Wassink

STREET AND NUMBER:
Shipyard Ferry Road
CITY OR TOWN:
Camden

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Camden County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
CITY OR TOWN:
Camden

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:

FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY NUMBER DATE
Milford, whose 1746 construction date is carved on a brick on the interior face of the north chimney, stands on a broad grassy site shaded by ancient trees. The formal two-story brick gabled structure, two bays deep and three bays wide, has interior end chimneys terminating in molded caps. The brickwork is of Flemish bond with glazed headers, featuring three-course stringers of Flemish bond between the first and second stories and at the base of the gables. The use of one-to-three common bond in the brick of the south gable represents the earliest known example of this type of bonding in North Carolina. The north gable probably corresponds, but the entire north side is now concealed by stucco. Tumbling of the brick occurs along the rakes of the south gable. Tumbled bricks are usually placed at right angles to the gable slope, and the vertical placement of these bricks is, according to Thomas Waterman in The Early Architecture of North Carolina, found in only one other structure, the Wallop house in Accomac County, Virginia.

The west facade formerly functioned as the principal front, but the main entrance is located now in the central bay of the east facade. The doorway as well as the windows of the first story are ornamented only by flat arches serving as lintels. The windows of the second story, set quite close to the cornice, are completely plain. The lintels are formed of rowlocks which originally surmounted the south gable windows are still visible, although the windows are now much smaller. The first and second story windows contain nine-over-nine sash, and the altered south gable windows have four-over-four sash. The windows of the north side, even narrower than those of the front and rear, have six-over-six sash at the first level and four-over-four at the second and in the gable. Each of the openings of the structure is deeply recessed, with splayed reveals. The great plaster cornice cornices, believed by Waterman to be unique in colonial architecture south of Maryland, further enhance the monumentality of the house.

The floor plan originally consisted at both levels of one room on either side of a central hall. The interior trim is twentieth century. The unusual positioning of each chimney, which is placed off-center at the lower level and makes a diagonal change of direction in the gable end so that the chimney stack breaks through at the gable peak, is visible in the interior of the attic.
When Thomas Paling conveyed 300 acres (part of a tract granted to Thomas Relfe in 1696) to John Ivey on July 13, 1721, the deed contained a reference to "all houses out houses gardens orchards edifices . . . .", but the purchase price of £25 indicates that the large brick house now standing on this property is probably not the house referred to in this deed. John Ivey's will dated September 15, 1771, gives to "my son James Ivey my manor plantation and land whereon I now live to Cow Creek Bridge Branch and all the land belonging to the said Plantation." Dated bricks bearing the inscription 1746 have been found in the interior walls of the house, indicating that the house was built by John Ivey. On March 13, 1783, James Ivey sold his father's house as well as 44 acres to Joseph James, a merchant, for £83 specie. The deed noted that the property was originally "contained in and part of a grant to Thomas Relfe dated February 1, 1696."

On November 18, 1801, commissioners appointed by the county court of Camden divided the lands of Joseph Jones among his legal heirs. Margaret Jones Grice was allotted 356 1/3 acres in this settlement which included the old Ivey house, by that time called "Milford." The property became embroiled in a series of legal entanglements but emerged in the hands of Miles Gregory. T. B. Boushel surveyed the property and divided it into lots in 1869, at which time the property was referred to as the "Shipyard" tract. Boushel's plat, which shows lot number one as containing the house, was registered on July 6, 1874, and Phernelia, Miles Gregory's wife, was awarded this lot by commissioners appointed by the probate court to divide Gregory's estate. Sometime later Phernelia's nephew, John Nash Sawyer, moved with his family to live with Phernelia at Milford. They apparently inherited Milford from their aunt for in 1884 John Nash Sawyer sold a portion of the Milford estate to the county for the Camden County Poor House. Milford remained in the Sawyer family until 1955 when John Sawyer's grandson, I. M. Sawyer, and his wife, Mary, sold Milford to Ernest E. Featherstone, who in turn sold the house to Dr. W. K. Wassink in 1960.

Architecturally Milford appears to be unique in the state. Features of the house such as the large expanse of bare wall area interrupted only by narrow openings, the high yet broad gable, the cove cornice, the string courses, and the unusual brick tumbling represent, according to Waterman, the direct importation of a style found in the Delaware River region. The structure is the only known surviving example of this Dutch idiom in architecture south of Maryland and is probably the earliest two-story brick dwelling in North Carolina.
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 [X]
- Local □

Name

H. G. Jones

Title

Director, State Department of Archives and History

Date

8 October 1971

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

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register
Pasquotank County Records, State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh North Carolina. (Subgroups: Deeds and Wills).
