

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR

Catawba County Multiple Resource Nomination

MULTIPLE RESOURCE OR THEMATIC NOMINATION

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Clement Geitner House

AND/OR COMMON

Geitner House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

436 Main Avenue NW

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Hickory

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

North Carolina

VICINITY OF

CODE

037

COUNTY

Catawba

CODE

035

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input checked="" 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

Carolina Development Company

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 1149

CITY, TOWN

Hickory

STATE

North Carolina 28603

VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Register of Deeds Office

STREET & NUMBER

Catawba County Justice Center

CITY, TOWN

Newton

STATE

North Carolina

6 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Laura A. W. Phillips, Consultant

Historical Research: Jim Sumner, Research Branch
Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, N. C.

ORGANIZATION

DATE

June 16, 1983

STREET & NUMBER

637 N. Spring Street

TELEPHONE

919/727-1968

CITY OR TOWN

Winston-Salem

STATE

North Carolina 27101

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Clement Geitner House in Hickory is a two-story brick, double pile house built in 1882. It is one of a small group of houses of this type built in Catawba County during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. (Other surviving examples include the Self-Troot-Bickett House and the Yount-Witherspoon House, both in Newton.) Although the Geitner House has been adaptively re-used during the twentieth century by the American Legion and then by Piedmont Natural Gas Company, it has remained surprisingly intact. During the last twenty years, however, it has not been well maintained.

The large Geitner House rests on a stone foundation with metal grill cellar ventilators. One of these, on the west side, is designed with a beautiful curvilinear foliate pattern. From the foundation, the five-to-one common bond brick walls (painted tan) rise to the broad gable roof with its boxed and molded cornice. Widely overhanging eaves are supported on south and north sides by paired curvilinear brackets set against wide frieze board. Two large interior chimneys with corbelled caps rise from the ridge of the roof. Paired one-over-one sash windows with flat-arched brick lintels are symmetrically arranged across the three-bay-wide facade (south) and on the east side. The west side carries out this symmetry except for the interjection of the one-story, three-sided bay window which itself has one-over-one sash. The bay window repeats the overhanging bracketed eaves of the main roof. At one time the windows of the Geitner House had shutters, but now only some of the hardware remains.

The one-story front (south) porch shelters the center bay entrance and its flanking windows, but does not cover the entire length of the facade. The porch has a low hipped roof with overhanging bracketed eaves, chamfered posts, segmental arches formed by paneled spandrels, balustrade with spool-like turned balusters, and a wood floor above a paneled skirt. The porch rests on a brick pier foundation. At the center of the porch the main entrance has a six-panel door (a replacement), sidelights with wood panels below, and a single-light transom with diaper-patterned frosted glass.

The paired windows, the bracketed eaves, the west side bay window and the segmental arches of the porch show the influence of the Italianate style on the Geitner House.

Projecting from the rear (north side) of the Geitner House is a large, one-and-one-half-story brick veneer addition. Its lower floor is partially below grade because of the contour of the land, making it appear somewhat less intrusive than it might otherwise be. Built during the mid-twentieth century, this addition is five bays deep and two bays wide, projecting somewhat beyond the east side of the house. It has twelve-over-twelve sash windows, an exterior chimney on the west side, entrances on the south and west side, a flat-roofed extension on the west side, and an attached shed on the east side. The main (upper) floor of the addition houses a kitchen (in the northwest corner extension) and a large, pine paneled room with exposed wood truss roofing system.

The interior of the Geitner House features a center hall plan, which originally had two rooms on either side of the hall. Twentieth century remodelling has carved smaller spaces out of the two northeast rooms. On the first floor, sheetrock has covered some of the walls, celotex tiles cover the ceilings and linoleum covers the floors. Most of the five-panel doors remain intact. Door and window casings are reeded with bulls-eye corner blocks. None of the first floor mantels remain intact.

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Continuation sheet Architectural Description Item number 7 Page 1

In the center hall (both floors), however, the detailing is less altered. The hall has a high beaded board wainscot with molded chair rail and high molded baseboard. The stair rises from south to north along the west wall of the hall. It has a heavy square newel with turned molding on the corners and large and small bulls-eye detailing. The stair also displays a molded hand rail, square-cut balusters and an open string with scrolled brackets. The beaded board wainscot follows the stair to the second floor, where it continues around the hall. The stair was originally open at the second floor level, but is now enclosed with sheet rock and a door at the top of the stair. At the south end of the upper hall a second, enclosed stair leads to the attic.

On the second floor, the walls are plastered, with a high molded baseboard. The door and window trim is the same as on the first floor. Between the second floor rooms are closets with handsome double-leaf, five-panel doors. The only remaining mantel in the house is found in the northwest room. This mantel has reeded pilasters, a wide frieze with horizontal and vertical reeded bands and tiny bulls-eye blocks where the bands intersect, and a wide shelf supported by simple brackets with reeded face.

The Clement Geitner House is located on the northeast corner of Main Avenue and Fifth Street in northwest Hickory. It faces south toward the Southern Railway tracks--once a fashionable location. The remaining lawn on the south and west sides of the house has several large oak trees. The west side of the yard is bordered by a privet hedge, but a chain link fence borders the front (south) yard. East of the house, on the adjacent property, is a large gravel parking lot. North of the house is additional parking and a two-story, brick veneer modern building also used by Piedmont Natural Gas Company. It is on the same lot as the Geitner House, but is not included in this nomination.

The structure, of course, is closely related to the surrounding environment. Archaeological remains, such as trash pits, wells, and structural remains, which may be present, can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the structure. Information concerning use patterns, social standing and mobility, as well as structural details are often only evident in the archaeological record. Therefore, archaeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the structure. At this time no investigation has been done to discover these remains, but it is probable that they exist, and this should be considered in any development of the property.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

_____ NATIONAL

_____ STATE

_____ **X** _____ LOCAL

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/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY: _____)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1882

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Clement Geitner House is located in Hickory. It was built in 1882, shortly after Geitner and his family moved to Hickory from Lititz, Pennsylvania. Geitner was a tanner by trade, and he opened Hickory's second, and largest tannery. Geitner and two of his sons, Charles and George Harvey, were business, financial, and industrial leaders in Hickory. A daughter, Mary Geitner, who owned the house from her father's death in 1908 until her death in 1930, was prominent in Hickory literary and civic circles. The Geitner House is now used by the Piedmont Gas Company as a service center. The house's association with one of Hickory's most influential families in a number of spheres gives it its historical importance.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

- A. The Clement Geitner House is associated with the economic growth and development of Hickory during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
- B. The Clement Geitner House is associated with Clement Geitner and his sons, Charles and George Harvey, who were prominent business, financial, industrial and educational leaders in Hickory in the late 19th and early 20th century. The house was also the home of Clement Geitner's daughter, Mary Geitner, who was prominent in Hickory literary and civic circles during the early 20th century.

See continuation sheet

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,7	4687,20	3,9541,40
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C			

B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property consists of the south half of tract 1 (measuring 100' x 150') in block 8 on Catawba County tax map 18 H, as outlined in red on the accompanying map. It includes the Geitner House and that portion of tract 1 which immediately surrounds the house, thereby excluding the modern two-story building (not associated with the house) which is on the north half of the lot.

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The Clement Geitner House was built in Hickory in 1882. It was the first brick house in its northwest Hickory neighborhood and one of the first in the city. The Geitner family moved to Hickory from Pennsylvania and became one of the area's leading in the business, financial, and social worlds.

Clement Geitner (1825-1908) was a native of the Moravian community of Lititz, Pennsylvania, where he was a tanner. In 1881 he decided to move his tannery to Hickory, attracted by that town's need for a tannery, its abundant labor supply and the nearby forests of oak. Geitner and his wife, Frances Royer Geitner, brought three of their seven children with them: Charles, Mary, and Ellen. George Harvey Geitner joined his parents in 1882 while a fifth child, Emma, remained in Pennsylvania to complete her schooling. Two other children had died prior to the move to North Carolina. Geitner purchased a town lot from former mayor Isaac A. Hartsell for \$800 in 1882 and built his house shortly thereafter.¹

Hickory was just making the transition from town to city when Clement Geitner arrived. The town was incorporated in 1869, although its antecedents date back to the Hickory tavern of the 1790s. Its early importance was a trading center but industry was coming to the town when Geitner opened the town's second, and largest tannery. Industrial growth was retarded by the absence of available banking facilities. The Bank of Hickory was founded in 1886 but was undercapitalized and folded in 1890. The next year the First National Bank of Hickory was founded. Geitner was on the first board of directors of the bank. He remained in this position for many years.² His tannery quickly became one of the city's leading businesses. At his death in 1908 Clement Geitner was eulogized as "one of the . . . most highly respected citizens of this place [Hickory]."³

Two of Clement Geitner's sons were also business leaders in Hickory. Charles Geitner (1866-1941) continued to operate his father's tannery until closing it around 1930. He then opened a retail leather store. Charles Geitner was a longtime member of the board of directors of the First National Bank of Hickory and a long time member of the Hickory school board. He served as mayor of Hickory from 1913 until 1914.⁴ His brother George Harvey Geitner (1864-1955) was considered to be the "Grand Old Patriarch of Hickory." He was a member of the board of directors of Hickory's First National Bank, like his father and brother. G. H. Geitner had an interest in a number of area industries, including the Ivey Mill, the Piedmont Wagon Company, Shuford Mills, and the Falls Manufacturing Company. He served one term as mayor of Hickory, in 1893, was chairman of Hickory's school board for many years, and was a trustee of the Appalachian State Teachers College (now University) at Boone, and the State Hospital at Morganton.⁵

After Clement Geitner's death in 1908 his house became the property of his daughter Mary Geitner. After moving to North Carolina with the rest of her family in 1882 she taught school for several years. Following the death of her mother after only a short period in Hickory Mary Geitner quit the teaching profession and moved back to Hickory to live with her father. She was regarded as one of the most prominent women in the city. She was a founder of the Traveler's Club and a long time member of the Hickory Book Club. Miss Geitner was also active in the American Red Cross during the First World War.⁶

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Mary Geitner died in February of 1930. George Harvey Geitner owned the house until 1938. However, he did not live there. He sold it to Post 48 American Legion, who used it for their headquarters. In 1962 it was purchased by the Carolina Natural Gas Company, later the Piedmont Gas Company. The building is now owned by the Carolina Development Company, but is leased by the Gas Company, who use it for a service center. A major addition to the rear of the house has expanded its space and utility.⁷

The Geitner House's primary historical significance comes from its association with the Geitner family, one of the first families of Hickory's late nineteenth century industrial and financial development. Although no longer associated with the house, the Geitner family continues as an important family in present day Hickory.

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NOTES

¹Hickory Daily Record, January 31, 1942, September 11, 1965; Hugh Talmage Lefler, History of North Carolina (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 4 volumes, 1956), IV, 563-564, hereinafter cited as Lefler, History of North Carolina; Catawba County Deed Book 18, p. 447; Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, Catawba County, North Carolina.

²Charles J. Preslar, A History of Catawba County (Salisbury: Rowan Printing Company, 1954), 342, 345-346, hereinafter cited as Preslar, History of Catawba County; Hickory Daily Record, January 31, 1942, September 11, 1965; Levi Branson (ed.), North Carolina Business Directories (Raleigh: Various publishers, 1884-1897), 1884, p. 197; 1890, p. 172; 1896, p. 168; 1897, p. 168.

³Hickory Democrat, April 9, 1908.

⁴Hickory Daily Record, January 31, 1942, September 11, 1965; Preslar, History of Catawba County, 354.

⁵Hickory Daily Record, January 31, 1942, June 15, 1955, September 11, 1965; Lefler, History of North Carolina, IV, 563-564.

⁶Hickory Daily Record, February 25, 1930, September 11, 1965; Catawba County Deed Book 292, p. 263.

⁷Hickory Daily Record, September 11, 1965; Catawba County Deed Book 713, p. 59.

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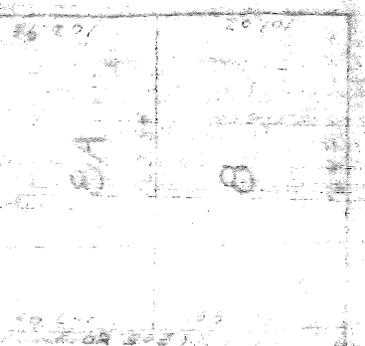
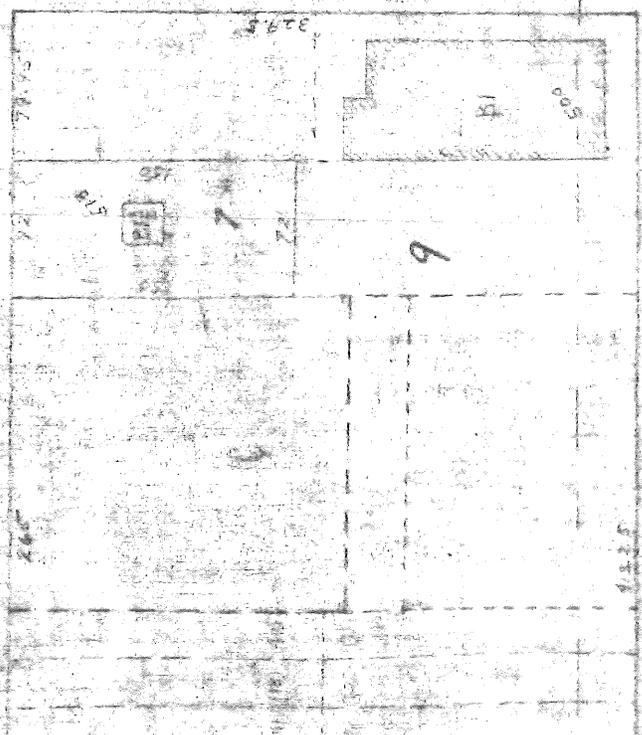
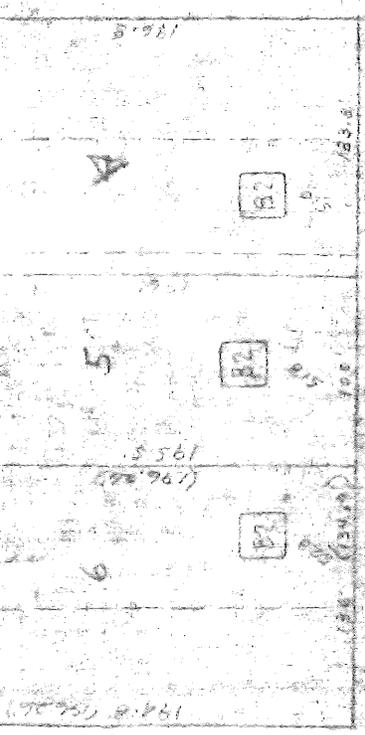
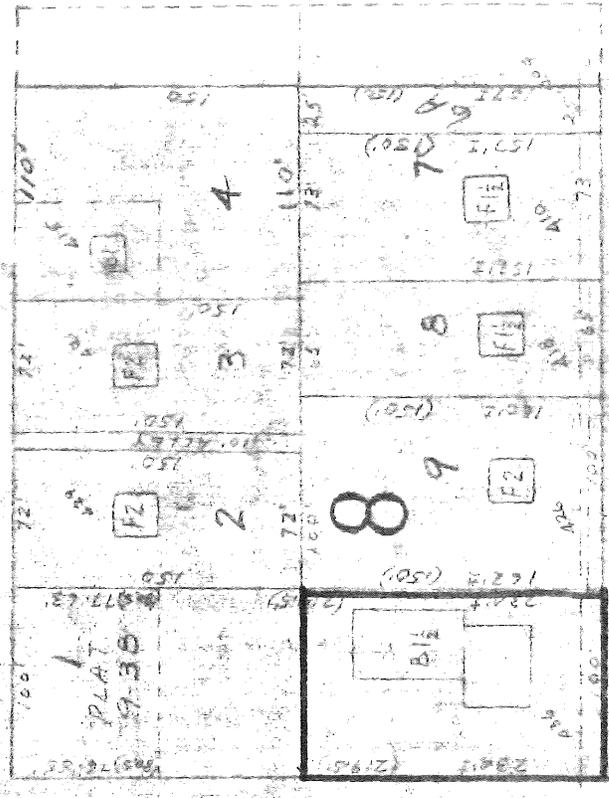
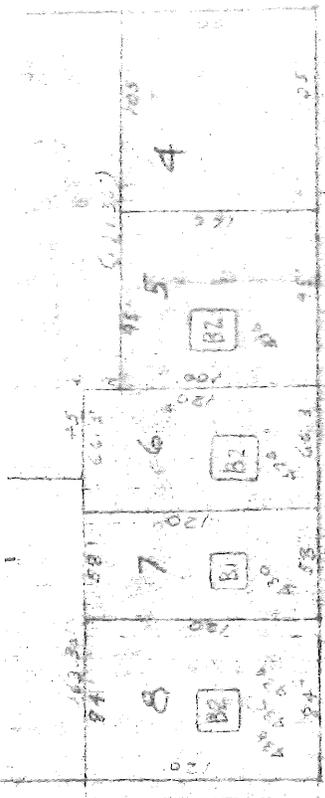
Hickory Daily Record. February 25, 1930, January 31, 1942, June 15, 1955, September 11, 1965.

Hickory Democrat. April 9, 1908.

Lefler, Hugh Talmage. History of North Carolina. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 4 volumes, 1956.

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R. A. L. A. O. A. P.

