United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form  

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "NA" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

   historic name  Self-Trott-Bickett House  
   other names/site number

2. Location

   street & number  531 S. College Avenue  
   city, town  Newton  
   state North Carolina  code NC  county Catawba  

3. Classification

   Ownership of Property
   - [ ] private
   - [ ] public-local
   - [ ] public-State
   - [ ] public-Federal

   Category of Property
   - [ ] building(s)
   - [ ] district
   - [ ] site
   - [ ] structure
   - [ ] object

   Number of Resources within Property
   - [ ] Contributing
   - [ ] Noncontributing
   - 1 building(s)
   - 1 district
   - 1 site
   - 1 structure
   - 1 object
   - 1 Total

   Name of related multiple property listing:
   Historic & Architectural Resources
   of Catawba County, N.C.

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

   As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

   In my opinion, the property meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.

   Signature of certifying official:
   [Signature]
   Date: 5/23/96

   State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

   I, hereby, certify that this property is:
   [ ] entered in the National Register.
   [ ] See continuation sheet.
   [ ] determined eligible for the National Register. [ ] See continuation sheet.
   [ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.
   [ ] removed from the National Register.
   [ ] other, (explain:)

   Signature of the Keeper
   Date of Action
The 1883 Self-Trott-Bickett House in Newton is one of only a few two-story brick, double pile houses remaining in Catawba County from the last quarter of the nineteenth century. (Other examples include the Yount-Witherspoon House in Newton’s North Main Avenue Historic District and the Clement H. Geitner House in the Oakwood Historic District in Hickory.) The Self-Trott-Bickett House faces west on the east side of South College Avenue in a residential area just south of the center of town. The house is largely shielded from the street by a row of trees -- mostly young dogwoods -- planted between the sidewalk and the street. The house is surrounded by boxwood and azaleas, and other types of shrubbery are found throughout the yard. The heavily wooded lot contains magnolia, dogwood, maple and elm trees.

The original part of the Self-Trott-Bickett House is three bays wide and two deep with a low hipped roof and exterior end chimneys, two per side, with corbelled caps. Bricks are laid in five-to-one common bond with pencilled joints. The symmetrically arranged windows consisting of twelve-over-twelve and nine-over-nine sash are circa 1972 replacements of casement windows which were themselves circa 1915 replacements of the original sash windows which had larger and fewer panes. The windows have a simple surround with ovolo molding and are headed by flat-arched brick lintels. Original exterior embellishment consists of the widely overhanging eaves with heavy, curvilinear sawnwork brackets set against a wide, plain frieze board -- an Italianate influence.

Local tradition claims that originally the house had only a small entrance portico, however a circa 1900 photo shows a three-bay porch of simple late Victorian style. This was replaced circa 1915 during Bickett ownership by the unusually heavy wrap-around porch. This porch has a hipped roof, cement floor, large square stuccoed posts, a solid brick skirt in lieu of a balustrade, and a full classical entablature with architrave, frieze and boxed and molded cornice. The central entrance which is sheltered by the front (west) porch was also remodelled (probably about the same time by the Bicketts) and now consists
of a glass-paneled door with beautiful leaded and beveled glass sidelights and transom.

A one-story brick gabled ell projects from the north end of the rear (east side) of the house. Whether it was an early addition or originally a separate kitchen structure that was later attached to the house is not certain. According to family tradition this ell served as servants' quarters in early years. The present owner believes that the ell once had a porch along the north side. Now there is deck of recent construction along the south side. At the same time this deck was built, a second story deck was also built on the east side of the house, with a wood exterior stair leading to it along the rear, north side of the house. The south side of the ell is a solid brick wall laid in common bond, but the east and north sides have been brick veneered. The ell windows appear to be recent alterations.

The interior of the two-story portion of the Self-Trott-Bickett House has a center hall flanked by two rooms per side on each floor. The walls and ceilings were originally plastered, but have been covered by sheet rock. First story floors are carpeted, but on the second story the original wide board flooring remains visible. Rooms are surrounded by a simple baseboard and molded cornice. Door and window surrounds are plain. Most of the original doors -- of the four-raised-panel type -- remain intact, but have been replaced, probably circa 1915, in the first floor west rooms by glass-paned French doors. In the center hall the stair rises from west to east along the south wall. It has a heavy, square newel with simple moldings (possibly a circa 1915 replacement of the original), an angular hand rail, square-cut balusters, and unusual curvilinear sawn brackets. No original mantels remain on the first floor. Those in the west (front) rooms have been replaced with mid-twentieth-century brick mantels, while those in the east (rear) rooms have been removed and the fireplaces enclosed.

On the second floor, however, the four original frame mantels do remain intact. Nearly identical but with slight variations, all are of the classical post-and-lintel type with base blocks, side pilasters, plain wide frieze, and plain shelf supported by a molded band.

The interior of the rear ell has been completely remodelled and now includes a modern kitchen across the east half, and a den, bathroom and small hall across the west half.
In the southeast corner of the lot is a small, frame garage (B, noncontributing) with German siding, gable roof, and shed attachment across the south side. This is definitely pre-1932, and is believed to have been built circa 1915 by Lawrence Bickett. (The 1932 Sanborn Map of Newton, the only one in a series of Newton Sanborn maps which includes South College Avenue, clearly shows the present porch and garage.)

While the Self-Trott-Bickett House has undergone numerous changes, beginning with the classical facelift give to it in 1915 and continuing with minor alterations from the 1950s into the 1980s, the house nevertheless retains sufficient integrity to convey a distinctive and imposing presence in Newton. The main block of the house is intact on the exterior, and the second floor of the interior is basically unaltered.
Self-Trott-Bickett House, Catawba County, N.C.

8. **Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

- [ ] nationally
- [ ] statewide
- [x] locally

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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**Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)**

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**Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)**

- Architecture
- 
- 
- 
- 

**Period of Significance**

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
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**Significant Dates**

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**Cultural Affiliation**

- N/A

**Significant Person**

- N/A

**Architect/Builder**

- Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

**Summary**

The **Self-Trott-Bickett House**, 331 South College Avenue in the Catawba County seat of Newton, is a two-story, double pile brick residence of Italianate Revival style built in 1883 by William R. Self, a prominent local manufacturer. The house is architecturally significant as one of a small number of nineteenth-century brick houses in the county, and one of an even smaller number that are double pile, and is eligible for listing under Criterion C within the property type, "Houses of Catawba County: Postbellum." In addition to Mr. Self, two other notable owners of the house were Sallie Trott, who ran a boarding house here in the early twentieth century, and Lawrence Bickett, a grocery wholesaler and brother of North Carolina governor Thomas W. Bickett. Bickett lived here from 1912 to 1921, and likely added the classical style entrance and front porch.

[See continuation sheet]
The Self-Trott-Bickett House at 331 South College Avenue in Newton was built between 1881 and 1883 by William R. Self and renovated around 1915 by Lawrence C. Bickett. It is located one block north of the former site of Catawba College (the school was moved to Salisbury in the 1920s). Although rooms in the house were regularly rented to students in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the history of the house is generally not associated with the school or its development. Rather, the Self-Trott-Bickett House and its owners are associated with the commercial development of Newton. Self established a number of manufacturing enterprises in the Newton area in the 1870s and 1880s; Bickett operated the town's first wholesale grocery firm in the 1910s.

William Riley Self (1836?-1921), builder of the house, lived there for less than one year. Self was a prominent manufacturer in the small town of Newton. The bricks used in his house were made in his own kiln. Self's brickyard, located only a short distance from the site of the house, employed four adult males and five children in 1880, a year in which they produced 200,000 bricks. In partnership with W. L. Killian, Self also operated a flour and gristmill which employed a similar number of workers and produced 240 barrels of wheat flour and 60,000 pounds of corn meal and feed in 1880. In 1884 Self also had livery stables and a steam powered sawmill and was the proprietor of the Newton Foundry and Machine Works. Self was apparently something of a tinkerer, remembered for having built an early steam-powered horseless carriage. In fact, he secured several patents, one of which he sold rights to locally in 1886. Whether that sale was prompted by financial difficulties cannot be determined. However, three years earlier Self had obviously overextended himself and found it necessary to sell his newly-built house and other property.

Before becoming a manufacturer and inventor Self had been a soldier and farmer. In July 1862 he had enlisted as a private in Company E of the Fifty-Seventh North Carolina Regiment. He saw action with the Confederates at Fredericksburg, Lynchburg, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg, and was slightly wounded on two occasions. Self's immediate postwar years were calmer ones spent farming, first in Cleveland County, and then in Catawba County. In 1865 Self married Mary Bost (1843?-1876), the daughter of Joseph Bost. They had two children, a son born in 1866.
and a daughter born five years later. The son, William Augustus Self, became a lawyer with a practice in Hickory beginning in the late 1880s and extending over forty years. The younger Self, said to have been a brilliant orator, was elected in 1902 to the state House of Representatives where he served one term. Seven years after the death of his first wife William R. Self married Catherine Summerrow in 1883, by whom he had at least one child, a daughter Annie, born in 1887.

William R. Self owned no land in Catawba County in 1870 when his personal estate was valued at $500. He began acquiring land in 1874, first from his father-in-law Joseph Bost and then from W. F. Rader and others. In 1880 Self, then a widower, and his son and daughter, then ages thirteen and nine, lived on Rader's farm. Self kept seventy acres in cultivation, mostly in corn, oats, wheat, and cotton, with one-half acre in vineyards. Only with the purchase of several town lots in 1880 and 1881 did he move from the farm into town. Self bought the lot where he was to build his house from Reuben Setzer, who owned much of the property in the southern part of Newton and who had given land to Catawba College for its campus some years earlier. Self built upon a one-acre tract for which he paid Setzer $250 in June 1881. While the building was underway Self is said to have loaned the plans to Sidney L. Yount, who is believed to be the builder of a nearly identical house on West 7th Street in Newton (the Witherspoon-Killian House, 128 W. 7th St., North Main Avenue Historic District, N.R.). In October 1883 Self, presumably in financial distress, sold two lots, including the house tract to George Rabb for $1,050. At the same time he sold his interest in one of his mills to his business partners W. L. Killian and W.P. Cline for $3,000. It is not clear where Self, his new wife and children moved after the sale. As of 1910 Self still lived on College Avenue in a boarding house operated by his sister-in-law Alice Summerrow. The establishment, known as the Summerrow House, had been in operation since the 1880s. Self, then age seventy, indicated that he was employed doing "odd jobs." Aside from him and his wife Catherine, their daughter Annie and her husband Floyd Yount lived in the Summerrow House in 1910. In addition ten others, mostly Newton merchants, clerks, and salesmen, boarded in the house. William R. Self died in 1921 at the age of eighty-four.

The house which Self had built and soon after vacated in 1883 also served as a boarding house at the turn of the century. Before that happened, however, the house quickly passed through a
succession of owners. Five months after the sale to George Rabb, on March 25, 1884, a tornado struck Newton causing an exceptional amount of damage. Self's barn and livery stable (and, by one report, his foundry) were destroyed but the house he built was untouched. Rabb sold the house and lot in 1888 to Self's friend and former neighbor W. F. Rader, who in turn sold it to Ann Dakin in 1897. In the following year Mrs. Dakin and her husband R. P., who was a manufacturer of sashes, doors and blinds, sold the tract to Sallie Trott, (1847-1910). Trott had some experience in operating a boarding house. Her husband, W. H. Trott, had had a hotel in the Catawba community in the northeast part of the county in 1884. Mrs. Trott moved to Newton in 1887 and may, in fact, have begun operating a boarding house at that time. Tradition has it that she regularly boarded Catawba College students at 331 South College Avenue, although none were in the house at the time the 1900 census was taken. Boarding with her at that time was only one individual, Sinclair Davidson, a single forty-three-year-old medical doctor. Also at the residence were two black servants, thirty-five-year-old Dock Lynch and fourteen-year-old Hattie Trott, presumably living in the quarters in the rear of the house. Mrs. Trott died in 1910. By the terms of her will all of her real estate was left to her stepson Wilfong Wilson Trott and to two nephews. In 1912 the heirs sold the house to Lawrence C. Bickett for $2,400. Laurence C. Bickett was the brother of Thomas W. Bickett, the popular World War I governor of North Carolina noted as an excellent orator and advocate of progressive causes. L. C. Bickett and his wife Mary Lou attended his brother's inauguration in Raleigh in 1917. The governor paid return visits to Newton during his term. On those occasions he stayed in the northwest upstairs bedroom in his brother's house. A special lock installed on the door of that room for security purposes is still in place. L. C. Bickett was the operator of Newton's first wholesale grocery firm. Between 1912, when he moved to Newton, and 1919 he bought several town lots as well as property elsewhere in the county. In 1915 he paid tax on his home lot valued at $1,380 and a vacant lot valued at $1,200. The classical remodelling of the house, including the new entrance, front porch and casement windows, were probably made by Bickett. Like W. R. Self before him, L. C. Bickett encountered financial problems and was foreclosed upon in 1921. The sheriff sold all of his property including the house to the highest bidder, Floyd E. Yount, for $8,110. Bickett reportedly moved to Mississippi.
Floyd Elmer (Bud) Yount (1874?-19 September 1956) had married Annie Self, the daughter of W. R. and Catherine Self, in 1909. Thus the house was returned to the family that had built it. Yount was a livery merchant and the operator of a grocery store located opposite the northeast corner of the courthouse square in Newton. His wife kept cows in the backyard and made dairy products to sell through his store. F.E. Yount owned other property in Newton, especially on College Avenue. In 1945 he was taxed on fourteen lots valued at $21,917 as well as 502 acres elsewhere in the county valued at $29,382. Yount died in 1956 and, although he left no will, the property apparently went to his wife Annie.

Darwin Harrison Samples, the present owner, bought the house and lot from Annie Yount in 1970. Since the purchase Samples has made numerous repairs and renovations to the building including covering the plaster walls with sheetrock, replacing many of the windows, putting new shingles on the roof, and installing new gutters. Samples was until 1978 married to Catherine Wolfe Yount, the daughter of William Sidney Yount, granddaughter of F. E. and Annie Yount, and thus the great-granddaughter of the house's builder William R. Self. Upon their separation in 1978 leading up to their divorce, Darwin Samples and his wife split their living arrangements between the main house and the one-story rear addition. Their son Steve, born in 1960, is thus the fifth generation of the same family to live in the Self-Trott-Bickett House.
FOOTNOTES

1Tenth Census, 1880, Manufacturing Schedule; Levi Branson (comp.), Branson's North Carolina Business Directory (Raleigh: Levi Branson, 1884), 197, 199.

2Darwin Harrison Samples, Information on the Self-Trott-Bickett House supplied to the Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, 1981; Catawba County Deed Book 32, p. 426.


5Ninth Census, 1870, Population Schedule; Catawba County Tax Records, North Carolina State Archives.

6Tenth Census, 1870, Population Schedule; Catawba County Tax Records, North Carolina State Archives.

7Catawba County Deed Book 15, p. 346; see also Deed Book 11, p. 543; Deed Book 15, p. 345; and Deed Book 18, p. 109; Samples, Information of the Self-Trott-Bickett House.

8Catawba County Deed Book 18, pp. 585-587.

9Thirteenth Census, 1910, Population Schedule; Branson's Directory, 1890, p. 171.

Twelfth Census, 1900, Population Schedule. Darwin Samples, the present owner, relates that at the turn of the century an argument took place between a doctor boarding at the house and a black servant. In the heat of the moment the doctor shot the black man, who fell dead in the driveway. Reportedly no charges were filed. Samples, Information on the Self-Trott-Bickett House.

Samples acquired full possession of the house by virtue of a deed in 1978. Catawba County Deed Book 1118, p. 896.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Newton Observer, clipping on the Self-Trott-Bickett House (undated).


(Raleigh) News and Observer, 12 January 1917.

Samples, Darwin Harrison. Information on the Self-Trott-Bickett House supplied to the Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, 1981.


9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one (1) acre.

UTM References

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Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is all of lot 5 in block 8, sheet 8N of Catawba County tax maps.

Boundary Justification

Entire city lot currently associated with historic property.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Barbara Kooiman, compiler; description, Laura A.W. Phillips; Michael Hill, history
organization Catawba County Historical Assn.
street & number Rt. 1, Box 76 AB
city or town Conover
city or town Conover
state N.C. zip code 28613
The following information pertains to all photographs:

1) Self-Trott-Bickett House
2) Newton, North Carolina
5) North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC

A. 3) Barbara Kooiman
4) July 1989
6) House, to northeast

B. 3) F. Bogue Wallin
4) January 1980
6) House, to east

C. 3) Greer Suttlemyer
4) January 1972
6) House, to southeast

D. 3) documentary photo
4) circa 1900
6) House, to east

E. 3) F. Bogue Wallin
4) January 1980
6) House, to northwest

F. 3) Laura Phillips
4) June 1983
6) House, rear ell, to southwest

G. 3) Laura Phillips
4) June 1983
6) House interior, stair

H. 3) Laura Phillips
4) June 1983
6) House interior, stair detail

I. 3) Laura Phillips
4) June 1983
6) House interior, mantel

NOTE: Most of the record photos used in this nomination were taken in 1983 and one was taken in 1972. As the 1989 overall view of the house shows, today it is virtually impossible to take a good photograph of the building due to the heavy foliage. Consequently, earlier overall views which better show the details of the main facade are included. The building was thoroughly field checked by Barbara Kooiman in 1989 and determined to be unchanged from appearance and condition portrayed in earlier photos.