

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	
North Carolina	
COUNTY:	
Craven	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

<b>1. NAME</b>				
<p>COMMON: <b>Isaac Taylor House</b></p> <p>AND/OR HISTORIC:</p>				
<b>2. LOCATION</b>				
<p>STREET AND NUMBER: <b>228 Craven Street</b></p> <p>CITY OR TOWN: <b>New Bern (First Congressional District, The Hon. Walter B. Jones)</b></p>				
STATE <b>North Carolina</b>	CODE <b>37</b>	COUNTY <b>Craven</b>	CODE <b>049</b>	
<b>3. CLASSIFICATION</b>				
CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____	Comments _____
<b>4 OWNER OF PROPERTY</b>				
OWNER'S NAME: <b>Mrs. William F. Ward</b>		STATE: <b>North Carolina</b> CODE: <b>37</b>		
STREET AND NUMBER: <b>P. O. Box 1428</b>				
CITY OR TOWN: <b>New Bern</b>		STATE: <b>North Carolina</b> CODE: <b>37</b>		
<b>5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION</b>				
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: <b>Craven County Courthouse</b>		STATE: <b>North Carolina</b> CODE: <b>37</b>		
STREET AND NUMBER: <b>302 Broad Street</b>				
CITY OR TOWN: <b>New Bern</b>		STATE: <b>North Carolina</b> CODE: <b>37</b>		
<b>6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS</b>				
TITLE OF SURVEY: <b>Historic American Buildings Survey (No. NC-172)</b>		DATE OF SURVEY: <b>1958 (NC-172)</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local		
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: <b>Library of Congress</b>				
STREET AND NUMBER: <b>East Capitol and Independence Avenue, S. E.</b>		CITY OR TOWN: <b>Washington</b> STATE: <b>D.C.</b> CODE: <b>11</b> DATE:		

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## 7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
(Check One)			(Check One)			
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Isaac Taylor House is perhaps the oldest of New Bern's group of surviving brick side-hall-plan town houses. It is unlike its compatriots in three respects: it is three full stories in height, it lacks an entrance porch, and it has a central (rather than interior end) chimney.

The house abuts the sidewalk and rises to a height of three stories plus attic over a full basement. Both above and below the molded water table, which runs completely around the house, the brick is laid in Flemish bond. A gable roof covers the structure and on the rear is pierced by a long dormer which is a twentieth century addition. The gable ends form a very slight parapet above the roof, and a wooden cornice augmented by dentils carries across the front (west) facade.

The house, which is three bays wide, has a handsome entrance in the south bay of the main facade. Fluted Tuscan pilasters support an open pediment ornamented with dentils. The pilaster caps are accentuated with pierced gouge work; relief sunbursts appear in the center of the pediment and in the end blocks. The six-panel door, set in matching reveals and soffit, is typical of New Bern Federal doors; that is, the lower two panels are flush and the four above are flat. Strips of delicate applied molding frame the fields of the flat panels. The lintel of the door is carved with designs that resemble wagon wheels, punctuating a band of vertical gouges. In the rectangular transom carved wooden members have been used to give a leaded fanlight effect. This transom, the heaviest and least sophisticated of its kind in New Bern, is also probably the earliest.

Each window opening contains six-over-six sash and is surmounted by a flat arch of rubbed and gauged brick. The exception to this rule is seen at the attic level on the south side where a large lunette occurs in the center. (A small window with four-over-four sash just to the west of the lunette was installed in the twentieth century.) A separate kitchen which formerly was located in the yard has been rebuilt adjacent to the northern bay of the rear facade in this century.

Inside all floors have an identical plan with two rooms opening onto a side hall. This was not always the case on the first floor, for originally the front room was accessible only from the street. This room served as an office for Taylor's business. Above the northern most bay on the west facade, the shadow of the early entrance pediment is still discernible. This street entrance was closed in 1846 when a door was cut through to the hall and the office converted to a parlor.

The woodwork in the Isaac Taylor House testifies to the elegance of life in early New Bern as well as to the ability of her craftsmen to work in the Adamesque mode. The wide hall, well detailed in every respect, features a transverse arch which forms a visual frame for the stair. Supported on fluted pilasters with pierced gouge work in the caps, the arch itself has a molded archivolt and keystone and paneled spandrels and soffit. Within the spandrels and soffit appear thin strips of applied molding. This same paneling technique also appears in the wainscot and on the interior box

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shutters which are set within splayed reveals. Deeply molded plaster cornices appear on either side of the arch. The stair rises in three flights with two square landings between them. The balustrade is composed of balusters square in section, tapered newel and posts, and a rounded handrail. Its ramped profile is repeated on the opposite wall by a continuation of the wainscot. A double wave pattern bracket is featured on the end of each step.

The front parlor bears evidence of three periods--the arches flanking the fireplace, the molded baseboard, and the plaster cornice are from the period of construction; the hall door and the interior box shutters are from the 1846 alteration; and the Adamesque mantel and passageway into the dining room are twentieth century alterations. The mantel, although not original to the house, is an early piece that replaced a marble one installed during the 1846 renovation. It is of traditional Federal design with a three-part frieze resting on fluted pilasters. Sunbursts adorn the end blocks and a fan dominates the center tablet. Between the frieze and the architrave appears a band of diamond and oval guilloche, and above the frieze, a shelf enhanced with a course of dentils and a cable molding breaks over the end blocks and bows above the center tablet. Twin paneled arches flank the fireplace. Originally both served as bookcases, but the present owners cut through the one on the south to provide access to the dining room behind.

The dining room is treated with a molded chair rail, baseboard, and plaster cornice. The mantel, although academic in design, is vernacular in detail. It features paneled pilasters with pierced gouge work in the caps and an unusual three-part frieze. The lozenges that are cut in the end blocks and the ovals in the center tablet have been backed up with vertical and horizontal reeding, respectively. Exceptionally long pierced dentils adorn the shelf which breaks above the end blocks. As in the front room, arches which spring from paneled pilasters flank the mantel; however, in the dining room, the arches are blind. The north arch surrounds a door of six flat panels behind which is a closet. Both dining room windows have paneled box shutters and are arranged with a window seat below. The north rear window was made into a door to the kitchen when that building was moved up to the house.

Because the first-floor front room was originally an office, the formal drawing room was on the second floor. Each door and window opening in this elegant room is flanked by paneled pilasters whose fields are framed by thin strips of delicate applied molding. The caps bear pierced vertical gouge work. These pilasters carry a full entablature with a plain frieze and end blocks, and a cornice enhanced with a band of dentils. Each dentil has been overlaid with a vertical strip of molding. The walls are plastered between a paneled wainscot and an elaborate cornice. The paneled wainscot, doors, and box shutters are all treated with applied molding repeating the motif of the pilasters. Most delicate of the elements in the drawing room is the carved cornice. The details in the top section of the cornice are obscured by

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layers of paint; below this run two bands--one of scallops and the other a beaded astragal. Flanked by the elaborate doors, one of which leads to a closet and the other to the room behind, the exceptionally tall mantel is a unique rendering of the Adamesque style in New Bern. The square fire opening is surrounded by marble and flanked by pairs of attenuated colonnettes. A band of vertical gouge work runs between the architrave and the three-part frieze, the center tablet of which is raised and outlined with a band of diamond and oval guilloche. Incised in the end blocks are ovals formed of radiating gouges around plain oval centers. The cornice shelf breaks above the end blocks and carries a course of dentils identical to those found in the overdoor and window entablatures.

By comparison, the other rooms in the Isaac Taylor House are treated simply. They have molded chair rails and baseboards, plaster dados and cornices, and less ornate Adamesque mantels. Interior box shutters occur throughout the second floor, but not on the third floor. Six panel doors with the fields of the panels outlined with strips of molding are consistently used on all three floors. No fireplaces occur in the attic.

The Isaac Taylor House, once set in a dense residential section, is now the only building in the immediate area which has maintained its domestic status. Four neighboring houses have been faced with modern materials for use as commercial concerns. Although the garden of the Taylor House formerly lay to the north, the present owners have landscaped a very pleasant garden at the rear of the lot with boxwoods and flowering shrubs. A wrought iron gate brought from Charleston, South Carolina, marks the entrance to the garden.

## SEE INSTRUCTIONS

## 8. SIGNIFICANCE

## PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century            |                                       |

## SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

## AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |  |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Aboriginal                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Education    | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering  | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry     | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention    | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape    | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature   | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Military     |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            | <input type="checkbox"/> Music        |  |  |

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Isaac Taylor was born in Scotland in 1762, and seemingly was already a man of some wealth when he emigrated to this country. He and a brother, James, sailed to North Carolina in their own brig, which they sold upon arrival in Wilmington. James remained in Wilmington but Isaac traveled to New Bern, quickly establishing himself, before he was thirty, as a merchant, ship owner, and planter. The capital required for his ventures would have taken more than the return from the sale of the brig, and it is likely that Isaac and James left Scotland after the death of their parents, bringing the proceeds of the estate with them.

Miller, in his recollections of New Bern in 1824, simply notes that Taylor was by then a "wealthy retired merchant," and that he was one of the most respected citizens of the town. Taylor had been extremely active in Masonic affairs, had held numerous offices in the local lodge, and was one of the most influential of its members in securing the land and building the Masonic Temple and theater in 1801-1809. He was on the committee which chose the site, participated in the cornerstone laying, and was one of the largest contributors to the construction fund. He was an early trustee of the First Presbyterian Church, and purchased pew number five when pews were placed on sale in 1822.

In May of 1792 Taylor purchased Lot 50 on Craven Street on which to build his house, and on November 9 married Hannah Justice. No designer or craftsman's name can be firmly associated with Isaac Taylor's house, but certainly the craftsmanship of the finish evidences a competent hand. The report of the Historic American Buildings Survey completed in 1958 attributes the house to John Hawks (the designer of Tryon Palace and other Georgian structures in the area), but Hawks is not known to have designed anything in the Adamesque manner, and he died in February of 1790, so that attribution is highly unlikely.

The house was probably completed by 1796 when one writer reported that

New Bern, it is there said, is the largest town in the state . . . the town contains about four hundred houses, all built of wood, excepting the . . . Palace, the church, the jail and two dwelling houses which are of brick. . . .

The church and jail are both gone, and only the west wing of Tryon's

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Palace survived a late eighteenth century fire. Both of the brick houses survive, however--the Benjamin Smith House on Hancock Street and the Isaac Taylor House.

Taylor died in 1841, leaving "my lot of land with the brick dwelling House" to his wife, Hannah. The inventory of his estate lists 75 slaves, a sizeable plantation, an unusual amount of cash and bonds in various New Bern and New York banks, and the furnishings of his house on Lot 50. These included two mahogany dining tables, three small tea tables, twenty mahogany chairs, three dozen "common Windsor chairs," a great amount of silver, a piano, three "Marseles" counterpanes, one set landscape china, and several hundred other items. Cows and horses are listed for the lot so evidently there was a barn and stable, and both a well-stocked storehouse and smoke-house are detailed, including "seventy-five bacons--hams, twenty-five middlings." A separate inventory is listed for the detached kitchen, and for the rather extensive library of both books and maps. The books were for the most part philosophy and poetry, with a number of volumes on agriculture and gardening.

Shortly after Taylor's death his wife converted his "counting house" (the downstairs front room which had served as his office) to household space, closing the door to the street. The 1846 bills for the changes amounted to more than \$300, and included \$45 for a white marble mantel. When Hannah Taylor died in 1853, she gave her three daughters, Phoebe, Frances, and Catherine, lifetime rights.

None of the three daughters married, and all three were in residence during the Civil War, when, after the arrival of Union forces in March of 1862, the town was continuously garrisoned. The Taylor House saw intensive use, serving among others, as the regimental headquarters of the 45th Massachusetts Volunteer Militia. The three sisters are said to have refused to leave the house and moved to the third floor when the rest of the house was given over to military usage. Albert W. Mann, in his history of the 45th Regiment wrote that

Our regimental headquarters were on the east side of Craven Street, halfway between South Front and Pollock Streets in a three-story brick house, with one room and doorway on the street. Colonel Codman said it belonged to a family of aged maiden ladies, who fled when the city was taken, and left behind them quite a fine library of old English books, most of them being of Queen Anne's or earlier date, 1714.

This seems to conflict somewhat with the story that the sisters refused to leave the house, but whether they left the house or moved to the third floor, they were in residence during the summer of 1864.

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The military use of the house during the Civil War resulted in unusual photographic and written documentation, for 1862 photographs and later photographs, made during a return to New Bern by the Massachusetts units in 1888, exist. There have been no changes in the facade of the house since 1862, with the exception of sidewalks, constructed early in this century, which necessitated a change in the steps to the entrance. The present owners have replaced the original steps, which were found in the garden to the rear of the house.

After the death of the last of the Taylor sisters in 1901 the estate was sold to W. B. Blades. He sold it almost immediately to Mrs. M. F. Nixon. The Nixon family maintained ownership until 1944, when the current owners, Mr. and Mrs. W. F. Ward, Sr., purchased the house and property to the rear.

The Isaac Taylor House is the earliest known brick house in New Bern in the Federal style. It is the only three-story house among the fine Federal side-hall-plan brick dwellings in the city, and is further distinguished by its handsome Federal interiors.

## SEE INSTRUCTIONS

## 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Carraway, Gertrude S. Years of Light, History of St. John's A. F. & A. M.  
New Bern, N.C. New Bern: Owen G. Dunn, 1944.
- Craven County Records, Craven County Courthouse, New Bern, North Carolina,  
 Office of the Register of Deeds (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).
- Craven County Records, State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh,  
 North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).
- Mann, A. W. History of the Forty-Fifth Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteer  
Militia. Jamaica Plains: Brookside Print, 1908.
- Miller, Stephen F. "Recollections of New Bern Fifty Years Ago," Our Living  
and Our Dead. New Bern, 1873.

## 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES  
DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY

CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE
NW	Degrees Minutes Seconds °     '     "	Degrees Minutes Seconds °     '     "
NE	°     '     "	°     '     "
SE	°     '     "	°     '     "
SW	°     '     "	°     '     "

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES  
DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY  
OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES

LATITUDE	LONGITUDE
Degrees Minutes Seconds 36° 06'	Degrees Minutes Seconds 77° 02' 24"

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1/4 acre

## LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

## 11. FORM PREPARED BY

## NAME AND TITLE:

Survey and Planning Unit Staff

## ORGANIZATION

State Department of Archives and History

## DATE

24 May 1972

## STREET AND NUMBER:

109 East Jones Street

## CITY OR TOWN:

Raleigh

## STATE

North Carolina

## CODE

37

## 12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

## NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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 Name H. G. JonesTitle Director, State Department of Archives and HistoryDate 24 May 1972

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 \_\_\_\_\_

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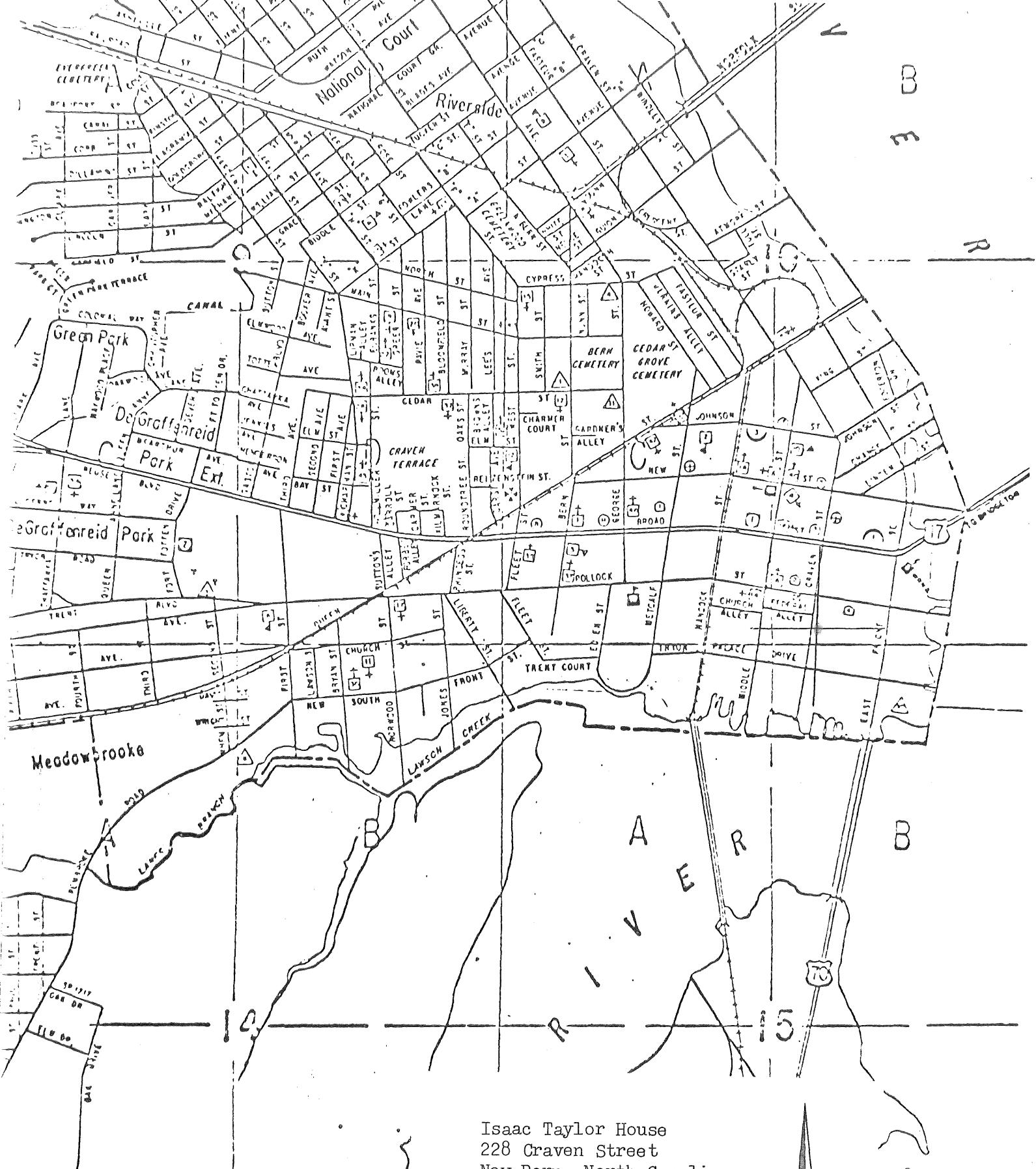
Francis Taylor estate papers, in the possession of Charles Hollister, Jr.,  
New Bern, North Carolina.

The Isaac Taylor Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North  
Carolina Library.

"The Isaac Taylor Family." Unpublished genealogy by Rose McCullough, New  
Bern, North Carolina.

Taylor-Ward House, leaflet, no publisher, no date.

Whitford, Colonel John D. "The Home of the Walking Stick, Early History of the  
Biblical Recorder and Baptist Church in New Bern." Unpublished  
manuscript in possession of Mr. G. Tull Richardson, Bellair, New Bern,  
North Carolina.



Isaac Taylor House  
228 Craven Street  
New Bern, North Carolina

Map of New Bern and Vicinity  
New Bern Chamber of Commerce  
Scale: 1"/1200 feet  
Date: No date

