

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 for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Cana Store and Post Office

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

E. Side S.R. 1411, 0.2 mi N of SR 1406

street & number (1198 Cana Road)

not for publication

city or town Mocksville

vicinity

state North Carolina

code NC

county Davie

code 059

zip code 27028

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Jeffrey A. Crow SHPO 7/31/01  
North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Classification

Ownership of Property  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade/Department Store

Government/Post Office

Social/Meeting Hall

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/Not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Gable-front commercial building

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Wood/Weatherboard

roof Metal/Tin

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheets

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- Criteria A, B, C, D with checkboxes and descriptions.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- Criteria A through G with checkboxes and descriptions.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Documentation checkboxes: preliminary determination, National Register, National Historic Landmark, Historic American Buildings Survey, Historic American Engineering Record.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Commerce, Communications, Social History

Period of Significance

1875-1951

Significant Dates

1875, CA 1930 (date of addition)

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Cain, James Harrison

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1   7	5   3   8   1   2   0	3   9   8   0   8   8   0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mrs. Carolyn Rich Hines/Mrs. Nancy Pulliam Sullivan

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date 2/19/01

street & number 708 Nottingham Road telephone 336-274-6143

city or town Greensboro state NC zip code 27408

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Cana Store and Post Office  
Mocksville Vicinity, North Carolina

### 7. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

#### THE SITE

The two-story building that faces Cana Road served as a general store and post office for the Cana, North Carolina community for more than seventy years. It sits on the well-landscaped and slightly downward sloping lawn of the Cain family farm. According to family oral tradition, the Cana Store and Post Office is estimated to have been built around 1875 by James Harrison Cain and local carpenters. (Personal Interviews, 1999) The builders used lumber from the family farm which had been owned by the Cains or their ancestors, the Frosts, since 1762. (Blackmore, 89). The lumber used for construction of the store was cut at the family sawmill. The building remains in good condition and is owned by one of James H. Cain's granddaughters.

The Cana Store and Post Office is located in Cana, Davie County, North Carolina, which in 1884 was described as "hilly, undulating, with red clay and rich loamy soils." (Chataigne, 1884). The Cana community is about seven miles north of the town of Mocksville, in the northwest part of Davie County, forty-five miles east of North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains at an elevation of 750 feet.

The Cana community, located in both the Clarksville and Mocksville townships, was built on land inherited by the children of Isaac Newton Frost, the father-in-law of James Harrison Cain. The land was located along Sweet (Frost's Mill) Creek where Frost operated a grist mill and a sassafras oil mill. In the 1880s, Ebenezer Frost and his brother-in-law James H. Cain laid out the village they called Cana, which was an area of around fourteen square miles. They surveyed the streets of Main, Second, Mill, Martin and Cain and sold lots. (Appendix B). In 1887, the village of Cana is noted on the J.T. Alderman map (Wall, 182-183).

According to Davie County Historian James Wall, "The village flourished for a time. A well-known academy attracted students from a rather wide area: Eaton's Baptist Church was nearby and several general stores operated there." (Wall, 292-293). Architectural historian Kirk Mohney writes, "Businesses around the turn of the century included several general stores, at least two tobacco factories, a sawmill and planing mill and a roller mill to grind feed and flour." (Mohney, 101).

A writer in Davie County Heritage North Carolina 1997 concludes that "Village streets were designed and lots were available, but the plan did not materialize and the area remained mostly farm land." (Davie Heritage Book Committee, 72). A retrospective drawing by Cana residents Mossa Eaton and Annie Laurie Etchison shows twenty-two buildings in the village at the turn of the century. (Hicks, 2) (Appendix B). Longtime resident Faye C. Rich estimates that only seven of the original buildings remain. Although, in some cases, other buildings replaced these, it is safe to say that the village grew smaller as the years passed. In 1896, Branson's Business Directory estimates the population at Cana to have been about twenty-five. Today we estimate it to be around fifty people.

#### THE BUILDING

The nominated property stands in the heart of the community, a little over one-tenth of a mile north of the intersection of Cana Road, SR 1411, and Angel Road, SR 1406; seven tenths of a mile south of Dutchman's Creek. The building faces west, standing seventeen feet east from Cana Road to allow space for

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a visiting horse and wagon. On the east rear of the building is a gravel north-south driveway and a woodshed outbuilding where wood was stored for an interior cast-iron stove in the adjacent store. The one-story woodshed is a contributing building, and it is located fifteen feet to the east of the store. This simple, one-story building was built in the 1930s of two-by-four wood framing saved from an old barn (built in the early 1900s) that was formerly located on the property. The thirty by fifteen foot woodshed lacks a foundation and is in deteriorating condition. It rises nine feet to a tin shed roof which slants downward on the east side to encourage rainwater runoff to a ditch. The north portion of the woodshed, open on the west side, was used to store wood for the store. The south part has a standard sized door that faces east and an oversized hinged door, that opens to the north, where an automobile was stored.

On the south side of the Cana Store, plantings include a large Japanese quince (*Chaenomeles japonica*), a large magnolia, and a fig tree still used by James Harrison Cain's granddaughter to make fig preserves.

The Cana Store and Post Office is a symmetrical, three-bay, two story edifice which rises to a centrally located, tin-clad gable roof. On the front façade (west elevation), a broad hip-roofed frame canopy extends twenty-one feet north to south and ten feet to the west of the building toward the road, serving as a "porte cochere."

The store is constructed of a light timber frame with 2" by 4" sawn studs. Horizontally slatted vents are visible below the gable's peak on the east and west sides of the building. Several window openings on the second floor remain protected only with vertical shutters.

The foundation of the Cana Store and the Post Office addition consists of dry-stacked stone piers with open space between. The stone piers and floor joists raise the floor of the building an average of nine inches above ground level. The entire building remains neatly clad in its original weatherboards, which are about five inches wide and of varying lengths. A modest, traditional building, the store's only decorative elements are the bargeboards highlighting the gable ends.

On the front facade (west elevation), four original well-worn wooden steps lead to a wide handmade screen door supported by original hinges. A large solid wooden door (3'5" wide by 7'4" tall), also bolstered by original hinges, leads inside. An original solid wood door (3'5" wide by 7'4" tall) provides entry to the east side of the building. To the right and the left of the door are wooden brackets that support bars which slide into place to lock the door. Pencil writing is still visible on the original weatherboards by the entrance including notations that, in 1915, wheat was sixty-six cents a bushel and oats eighty-one cents a bushel.

Two glass double-hung windows flank either side of the west front door. Two four over four double-hung windows flank the rear east door. In the shed Post Office addition, built in the 1930s on the north side, two double-hung windows allow light to enter from the north and the west.

The Cana Store and Post Office has witnessed few changes over the years. Two changes were made in the 1930s: the addition of the post office on the north side and the canopy on the front façade. A ten foot wide, shed-roofed addition was constructed along the entire north side of the building to create more room for the Post Office. This addition was divided into two rooms—the west room housed the Post Office and the east room, at the rear of the store, provided room for storage as well as access to the second story. The stairs to the second floor were moved to this addition to allow more space in the first floor main room of the store, where they were previously located.

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The broad hip-roofed frame canopy, added to the west entrance of the building in the 1930s, stretches across the store's doorway and display windows. Ten feet deep, the tin-roofed canopy is supported by two square timber posts that were rescued from the old Cana School that educated community children until the 1920s. On the front façade facing Cana Road, the canopy marks the main entrance to the store for passersby, while protecting customers and surplus goods from rain and the Southern sun. The building's weathered wood exterior has never been painted, except with a protective clear polyurethane in recent years. Over the years, the tin roof has been repaired and protected with black paint. In the 1940s the building's first-floor windows were protected with exterior vertical iron bars for security purposes. A deteriorating brick chimney (1' by 1'4") located in the center of the main store room (13 feet west of the east entrance) was lowered below the roof in the 1990s, also for safety reasons.

The interior of the Cana Store remains virtually unchanged since the late 1800s. Mohny writes, "The store in Cana has a central entrance room leading to a remarkably intact interior which has shelves lining the walls and long counters." (Mohny, 18). The first floor consists of one large central room that is almost square – 30' 6" wide by 30' 5" long. A black, three-legged cast-iron Warm Morning stove stands in the center rear and still provides the only source of heat for the building. The floor of the building is crafted of original pine boards. Walls and ceilings are covered with flush boards, and traces of sawdust insulation, the product of a local mill, are still visible in the flush board joints.

Long wooden shelves, which held merchandise for sale, line the north and south walls. The shelves begin a little over two feet from the ceiling and are one foot deep on the south side and 10 inches deep on the north side. Long wooden display counters stretch from west to east on the north and south sides of the center aisle. On the south wall, the long counter stretches for 24 feet, 8 inches. It is 2 feet, 8 inches wide and 2 feet, 10 inches tall and stands around two feet from the wall. Resting on top of the west end of the counter is an original rectangular glass display case that held thread, notions and other smaller goods. This case measures 5'7" by 2'1" by 1'1" and is edged in wood. The case is designed with a mirrored back to display its contents to best advantage.

The counter on the north wall was shortened in the 1930s to provide access to the shed post office addition. The counter that remains is 5 feet long, 2 feet 5 inches wide and 2 feet 10 inches tall. It stands 3 feet, 5 inches from the wall, farther than the south counter, perhaps to allow for the barrels of dried beans that stood behind the counter, ready to be scooped up for customers. The north counter has two built-in drawers – one crudely made from a wooden produce box, with wings added. The other is a money drawer with wooden receptacles for different types of change and a bell that rings if the money drawer is opened. A leftover part of the counter is still stored on the second floor.

On the west end of the north counter stands the store's original candy case that rises 3'4" from the floor and is 2 feet tall and 2 feet deep. With one shelf inside, this case has a glass front and top for easy viewing and diagonal wood on the sides. A spring-loaded furniture back and three lockable doors provided entry to the candy treasures inside. Additional free-standing items, such as a mail sorter and a safe, remain with the store and post office (see Appendix A for a list of additional items).

In the late 1930s, The Rural Electric Association (REA) made it possible to have electric lighting in the community. The original knob and tube wiring is still visible on the interior ceiling, providing electricity for the store's fourteen exposed light bulbs.

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Narrow wooden stairs in the northeast corner lead to a second-story one-room dry goods storage area, also floored in pine, which measures 20 feet, 5 inches wide and 30 feet 5 inches long. The unfinished walls show exposed weatherboard affixed to studs, and the ceiling area reveals rafters and rough-cut boards, spaced three to four inches apart, supporting a tin roof. One window on the east side of this room allows light to illuminate the second floor. Also on the east side is an unhinged "hay door" (2'3" wide by 5'9" tall) which was lifted out to create an opening for bales of hay to be dropped from the second floor storage area. (Personal interviews, 1999).

### 8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

#### Summary

Constructed around 1875 and used as a 4th class post office until 1954 and a general store until 1965, this well-preserved store and post office is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for social history, commerce, and communications.

According to local architectural historian Kirk F. Mohny, the Cana Store and Post Office is "one of only a few surviving late nineteenth-century frame commercial buildings in Davie County, and is a virtually unaltered example." (Mohny, 101). This type of rural commercial building is rapidly disappearing from the North Carolina countryside.

Located approximately seven miles north of Mocksville, the county seat, the Cana Store and Post Office played a major role associated with significant contributions to patterns of change in local history for seventy-five years. Serving as a pivotal center for change, this rural store and post office became a landmark agent for expansion and development over a broad geographic area. By using part of the store as a post office, mail from the outside world brought agricultural, political, and familial news. During the Roosevelt Administration, the Agricultural Stabilization Conservation Service was administered through the Cana Store to aid farmers in Depression-related agricultural issues. Political influence from "store meetings" brought electricity to Davie county, and transportation and communication evolved in this rural area when the store installed both the area's first hand-cranking telephone and first gasoline pump for automobiles. As both the importer and exporter of goods to and from the area, the store also played a major role in the area of commerce.

The Cana Store and Post Office served an important role in community social history, communications, and commerce from 1875 to 1951. Although the store continued to operate after 1951, it has been determined that the building does not have exceptional significance, and therefore the fifty-year cut-off date for Criterion A is the end of the period of significance.

### CRITERION A: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND SOCIAL HISTORY, COMMERCE, AND COMMUNICATIONS CONTEXTS

As early as 1762 Frost/Cain family ancestors purchased land on which the Cana Store and Post Office still stands "on the waters of Dutchman Creek, west side of the Yadkin River." (Rowan County Deedbook 4,

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760-761). By 1800 the North Carolina General Assembly cancelled all debts associated with land purchases through The Land Act, freeing the family to use its resources to expand and develop for the growing population of Davie County. By 1850 farms and agriculture were generating a sharp increase in land values, greater crop production, and an increasing need for household necessities, farm equipment, and goods and services for rural families. But the Civil War years were harsh years in Davie County, with prices escalating to unreasonable levels because of the acute shortage of farmers and laborers. Little cotton and tobacco was raised for sale, and families were forced to resort to makeshift living at best. Historian James H. Wall describes the post-Civil War economy as a test of survival. "Inflated Confederate currency, hoarding, profiteering, and extortion made bad matters worse. Inadequate clothing and shoes, lack of medicines, and scarcity of food resulted in severe malnutrition, followed by untold suffering, sickness, and death." (Wall, 201). Securing basic needs became a matter of vital importance for Davie County residents.

After the Civil War, Confederate sailor James Harrison Cain (1845-1932) returned to Davie County to begin rebuilding his life. (Family Connections). In 1868 he married Elizabeth Amy Frost, who later acquired a tract of land adjoining the water of Dutchman's Creek "as her dower in law." (Blackmore, 93). Elizabeth Amy and James Harrison Cain built a home on this land. Records from the late 1860s and early 1870s show that Cain was probably buying goods for the community prior to building the store on the property around 1875. A bill of sale for February 5, 1874 shows him buying in bulk: 55 lbs. coffee; 75 lbs. sugar; 25 lbs. candy; and 48 yards calico; in exchange for 2 sacks flour; 30 doz. eggs; and butter. Branson's Business Directory lists Cain as a merchant in Cana from 1877 until at least 1907. His energy, interest and entrepreneurial spirit was clearly moving him in a direction that would change commerce and community life in the Cana area of Davie County.

### The Cana Post Office

The building is also significant for its distinction as a post office, which introduced an important service that greatly influenced the communication systems of the Cana community. The Cana Post Office was among several post offices established in the county after the Civil War. Some earlier area post offices (and their dates of establishments) were: Smith Grove (1834); Farmington (1837); Jerusalem (1850); and Calahain (1861).

Farmington appears to be the post office with the most years of operation (1837-1954), with Cana accumulating the second most (1875-1954). Over its years of operation, the Cana Post Office had several postmasters (and one postmistress) that reflected the fluctuations in political power that came with seventeen different presidential administrations from 1875-1954. James Harrison Cain (1875-1897); John M. Bailey (1898-1914); William Henry Foote (1914-1919); and Ina Naylor Cain (1919-1954).

Bailey operated the Cana Post Office in a front room of his house and Foote, in his general store. After Foote left the area to grow tobacco in Virginia, the operation of the Cana Post Office returned to the Cain family, this time to James Harrison Cain's daughter-in-law, Postmistress Ina Naylor Cain. When the postal operation outgrew a corner of the Cana Store in the 1930s, the Cains built a shed addition to the store to house the post office. The existence of ledger books for the communities of Felix and Nestor confirms that Cana was also the "mail to" location for these communities (Postmaster Accounts and Records).

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On February 12, 1875 James Cain applied for and received status as a fourth class post office to be located in his store. It is worth noting that the United States Postmaster General ended up naming not only the post office, but the community as well! After denying the original name request (Cain) because of name duplication, the Postmaster General sent word to name the site Cana. Thus the store became the Cana Store and Post Office and the community was thereafter called Cana (Hicks,4).

In the post office area of the building, records show an active business in selling stamps and registering mail. Of the time around 1918, author William Grubbs, who grew up in the community, remembers, "Those were the days of the two-cent stamp and the one-cent postal card." ( Grubbs, 23). Nine handwritten ledgers that still exist from 1895 through 1922 detail "Postmasters Accounts and Records". Eight ledgers, dating from 1879 to 1927, record every piece of mail coming to or through the Cana Post Office (Registered Matter in Transit) by name, city of origination and city of destination. A copy of the Postal Laws and Regulations (1902) outlines in detail the duties of the Postmaster. Some examples include answering communications promptly, not acting as lottery agents, posting weather bureau reports, and sending telegraphic reports of robbers.

Rural delivery of mail began on July 2, 1902 and delivery from the Cana Post Office was dependent on two mail carriers chosen by the Postmaster. Residents applied for rural delivery, with mail routes generally extending within a twenty-five mile radius and delivery occurring six days per week in the Cana and Courtney communities. Records were kept by the carriers outlining road conditions (Registry of Arrivals and Departures of Mails, 1898), and modes of transportation over the years included horseback, horse and cart, Model T, Model A, and truck. James Harrison Cain's son, John Boyce Cain, who served as assistant postmaster (1919-1954), recalled "he often had to use a lantern to see his way home at night" (Davie County Enterprise, August 31, 1972).

According to William Grubbs, "The postmaster or postmistress and the mail carriers were the only U.S. government employees in the community, and the postal system was the only service provided by the government directly to the people of the community." In addition to the mail service the postal system operated the parcel post system which began in 1913. Through that system people were able to order articles from such mail order houses as Sears Roebuck and Company and Montgomery Ward.

The postal office gave the people a sense of identity, a means through which they could communicate with relatives or friends readily. Letters could be mailed to or received from people anywhere in the state, the nation, or the world." (Grubbs, 23). Clearly James Harrison Cain, and the postmasters and postmistress to follow, were responsible for helping bring news of the changing world into and out of his previously isolated community.

Besides the significance of news coming to and from Cana, the impact of the Cana Store and Post Office on the social history of area residents had far-reaching effects. For many, coming to the Cana Store to retrieve mail created an opportunity to discuss politics, land use, crop suggestions, and family news. Social change came in many forms with the site being well known for providing stimulating conversations around the stove regarding letters, newspapers, and eventually the radio full of "news in the world."

William Grubbs remembers,

People who went to the store usually took their time and were in no apparent hurry. They talked with the storekeeper and other people who might be there. During the winter months they might sit around the stove, chew

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tobacco, smoke, and talk, or even engage in a game of checkers. During the summer months, when it's too hot to sit inside, chairs and nail kegs might be pulled out the back door of the Cain Store and the above activities carried on under the shade of trees just outside the door. It should be said that such activities were carried on by men and boys only. (Grubbs, 23).

In 1954, the Cana Post Office became the last fourth-class post office to close in North Carolina. During the seventy-nine years of its operation, this crossroads community was forever changed because of the exchange of ideas and information that took place at the Cana Store and Post Office. The influence of James Harrison Cain as postmaster and Ina Naylor Cain as postmistress and John Boyce Cain as assistant postmaster in this small simple post office set the tone for progress in the community and county at large.

### The Cana Store

Of equal importance to the post office was the 1875 opening of the Cana Store. With a clear eye on the needs of the community, James Harrison Cain created a general store that residents depended on for over seventy-five years. Ledgers and bills of sale show that the bartering system of payment was often used as customers paid their bills with such commodities as fresh eggs, corn and wheat. (J. H. Cain Store Record Book, 1884). Charge accounts were also available to all local residents. "The general store carried a great variety of things which the country people needed." (Grubbs, 22). Fresh eggs and produce from area farms could be found on the long shelves, and bolts of "calico and ticking," screws, seeds, spices, shoes, gun powder, and wax were always available (Bills of Sale, 1880-1960). Medicines like Castor Oil and Vicks Vapo-Rub were available as well as "Dr. Parker's antidyspeptic tablets" for 25 cents which were used for "nervous prostration" (Leaflet, 1904). By March 4, 1883 Richmond Frank Cain wrote to his brother, James Harrison Cain, saying he was "glad to learn you had a prosperous year".

The exchange of flour and its raw materials was a common occurrence in the affairs of the Cana Store. As early as December 1874, a receipt for merchandise purchased from McCubbins, Beall and Julian of Salisbury indicated that James Harrison Cain bought 15 items that included 50 pounds of coffee, 12 yards of flannel and 33 1/2 yards of plaid. Cain's bill was credited with \$10.85 in exchange for goods he brought with him including seven sacks of flour, two bushels of peas, 17 1/2 dozen eggs and seven pounds of butter. (Bill of sale, December 1874). In 1880 James Harrison Cain bought his brothers Ebenezer Cain and Benjamin Cain's interest in a flour mill. (Duplicate contract written in the hand of Ebenezer Frost, February 11, 1880.) Later in the year, York Water Wheel and Mill Furnishings shipped equipment to Cain for expanding a mill (Letter, April 22, 1880). Discussing the order, Cain wrote that, "two horses can easily pull it, as the roads are now generally very good" (Letter, July 6, 1880). In keeping with Cain's progressive nature, by 1901 the Cana Store received "an updated milling plan and equipment" (Letter, General Mill Furnisher, Chicago, Illinois, 1901). Records show that the recently opened train service to Mocksville, which began November 1, 1891, meant that "plowers from East Bend for \$100, boilers from Crawford Plumbing for \$150 and mill supplies would be shipped costing \$25.80" (Receipts and ledgers, 1901 - 1908).

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James Harrison Cain also served as a broker for lumber, not only for area residents, but for lumber companies as well. Cain's July 1884 Sales Record Book indicates that he contracted with several local residents—including LM Smith, Walter Chaffin and CA Hall—for lumber including "laths, plates and bark edge plank." In 1909 Cain and his wife contracted with Kincaid and Fleming for the sale of all the oak and poplar timber "suitable for lumber" from 75 acres of their own land. (Duplicate contract, January 1909). In 1909 both the "Alabama Lumber and Export Company and Kincaid and Fleming of Cleveland, North Carolina requested oak and long or shortleaf pine – in principally 16 ft. length" (Letters, March 30, 1909 and October 6, 1909). And two 1915 letters describe James H. Cain as serving as agent for Pritchard and Agnes Cain in the sale of hay and lumber.

The Rural Electric Association (REA) brought electricity to the area in the late 1930s, but the stage was set earlier by influence of the Cain family. As early as 1915, Pritchard Cain wrote his father James saying, "I learn that there is a man here (Winston-Salem) who is figuring on an electric plan for Mocksville. I learn that he has secured 400 houses to light. He said his plant would cost \$6,000. If I can see him or get him word to come down and look around, will do so. You can inquire and be on the lookout for him" (Letter, August 13, 1915). Another son of James Harrison Cain, John Boyce Cain, (also Cana Store proprietor) was a charter member and officer of the Board of Directors of the Davie Electric Membership Corporation. (Blackmore, 50).

As automobiles arrived in the area, the Cana Store became Pure Oil Company's supplier of motor oil, kerosene, and gasoline from the store's only pump. Dairy farmers from the community brought milk and cream to the Cana Store for the Rowan Creamery to purchase and transport back to Salisbury for distribution (Records, 1937). In the 1930s coal was delivered to the Cana Store and a glass-front icebox was purchased for cooling food. Receipts for Kentucky Red Barn Paint as well as shirts arriving from New York reflected a changing rural environment (Letter, Madison Mills Company, November 9, 1931). A July 1948 invoice from the Cooleemee Journal showed that the Cana Store advertised the latest in offerings in residential and farm needs.

During the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century Davie County's economy was based on agriculture. A 1927 Soil Survey showed that the Cana area had Iredell Series loam, "an important soil agriculturally." (Soil Survey of Davie County, NC, 1927) It is therefore not surprising that education for farmers would be an important theme spanning the ninety years of store operation. As early as 1898 there were discussions at the store about "bicarbonate sulfate to destroy weevils" (Journal, James H. Cain). In 1922 the focus was on fertilizer and phosfo tobacco issues, and information was shared about "the whole secret of successful wheat growing" (Letter, Virginia-Carolina Chemical Company, September 18, 1922).

During the Roosevelt Administration the Agricultural Stabilization Conservation Service administered aid to farmers at the Cana Store, helping minimize the effect of the Depression on agriculture. Store proprietor John Boyce Cain served with this organization as county committeeman in charge of programs from 1939 to 1948. In 1941 the United States Department of Agriculture notified Cana residents at the store that "the war situation makes this year's cotton situation more serious than any since quotas were first adopted" (Letter, December 4, 1941). The community relied upon regular postings in the store from the War Food Administration about ration books, applying for wheat crop insurance, flue-cured tobacco issues, and Weather and Crops in North Carolina. As World War II ended, the 1946 Farm Plan and Performance Report was available at the Cana Store outlining a new farm plan.

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By the late 1940s and early 1950s prosperity in surrounding Forsyth County lured farmers to factory work for stable wages and benefits. The Cana Store remained a steady influence and supplier of goods to the community, but clearly the shift to larger groceries and the influence of television was again changing the shape of the community. Loyal shoppers to the Cana Store helped it retain its integrity and influence until it closed in 1965.

The scope of historical influence surrounding the Cana Store and Post Office has been felt across four generations. The social history, communication network, and commercial life of the Cana area were affected by the intellect, energy, and efforts of those who operated the Cana Store and Post Office and by those who frequented the establishment.

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### 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

#### Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property, at the northeast corner of the intersection of Cana Road (State Road 1411) and the unimproved Henry Howard Road, measures 80 feet east and west by 55 feet north and south. The property is indicated on the attached Davie County tax map E-4 (scale 1" = 400').

#### Justification

The boundaries include the original setting of the Cana Store and Post Office and woodshed. The north boundary of the tract is drawn to exclude the Cain family home, built in 1926.

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### APPENDIX A

#### Existing Freestanding Furnishings and Equipment of Historic Interest in the Cana Store and Post Office

- Wooden cobbler's table
- A wooden "Leader Separator," a mechanical corn sheller made in Richmond, Virginia, by Charles T. Palm, manufacturers
- A three-legged metal kerosene heater
- A wooden coffee barrel, made in Richmond by Bowers Brothers
- A seed bin
- A freestanding scale and a counter scale
- An old safe
- An original wooden mail sorter used by James Harrison Cain
- A wooden icebox with mirrored top (20" deep, 36" wide, 108" tall)
- A chest style Coca-Cola machine from the late 1950s, red metal with white lettering (3'5" wide, 2'2" deep, and 2'10" tall)



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(LONE HICKORY)

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

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Davie Co, NC

Cava Store  
and  
Post Office



