

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCMS use only  
received \_\_\_\_\_  
date entered \_\_\_\_\_

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Theodore S. Meekins House

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number 319 Sir Walter Raleigh Street \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Manteo \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district First

state North Carolina code 037 county Dare code 055

**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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input 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
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Mrs. Theodore Meekins, Jr.

street & number 319 Sir Walter Raleigh Street

city, town Manteo \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state North Carolina

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dare County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Manteo \_\_\_\_\_ state North Carolina

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title N/A has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date \_\_\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state

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## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Theodore S. Meekins House, set on a rectangular corner lot enclosed by a low white picket fence, owes its present appearance to a 1910-1912 renovation and major expansion of a modest one story frame house. The Meekins family had acquired the lot with a small frame house, apparently a one-story dwelling now the kitchen ell, in 1904. Meekins had the present house constructed between 1910 and 1912 by local carpenters Joe Dailey and John Wilson. Wilson and Dailey both had wide experience in the carpentry trade in the Outer Banks. According to tradition the millwork was executed by Cramer Brothers in Elizabeth City who also provided much of the building material for construction on the Outer Banks.

The house is said to be modeled on a photograph which caught the fancy of Meekin's wife, Rosa. The highly picturesque composition is enlivened by a variety of rooflines, the use of weatherboards and shingles, and an unusual variety in the placement, grouping, and size window openings as well as sash type. The three-story tower, two-story bays, and a variety of architectural moldings and devices plus the encircling one-story porch further enrich the appearance of this two-and-a-half-story house which remains the largest house in Manteo, the Dare County seat on Roanoke Island.

Not unlike many houses of the early 20th century, the house is essentially rectangular in plan and form with a rich picturesqueness achieved by the lavish combination and composition of its elevations. The rectangularity of the mass is broken up by the repetition of two-story bays on the northeast, southeast (front), and southwest elevations and by the grand three story tower on the house's south corner. A one-story Colonial Revival porch with turned posts and a balustrade carries across the front elevation, wraps the tower and continues along either of the main block's side elevations.

The two-and-a-half-story main block is covered with weatherboards and a gabled roof with an intersecting gable projecting forward on the southeast elevation. Chimneys rise through the roof of the main block and the one-story ell. The deep overhang of the main block is supported by shaped consoles.

The tower inset on the south corner, is framed by bold gable fronts which dominate the southeast and southwest elevations. A third gable front is set on the northeast gable end of the main block. The first two stages of the tower are covered with weatherboards while the third story is covered with straight edge shingles. Similarly the first and second story elevations of the house are covered with weatherboards, while the gable fronts are covered with round edge shingles. The shingle faced gable fronts splay from the apex to the base of their triangular shape, thus adding to the plasticity of the composition. An ogee roofed block is set beside the tower on the third story.

On the elevations below each of the gable fronts, bays project from the body of the house to the gable's eave--the depth of the overhang--to balance the curve of the tower. The southeast and southwest gable faces feature three part windows with a taller one-over-one sash window flanked by four over four sash windows at each side. The center window features a perimeter of small colored glass panes enframing the clear center pane. The remainder of the house's window openings contain four-over-four, two-over-two, and one-over-one sash. The windows are set in simply molded surrounds with projecting top members. A single one-over-one sash is set in the center of the northeast gable face. Here again, the clear center pane is encircled by small colored glass panes. Although the projecting bays are splayed on the front and northeast elevations, the bay on the southwest elevation is rectangular and straight-sided with a small one story-hipped roof sunroom at its base. The one-story porch stops just short of connecting with the bay.

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A one-story rear ell--the original portion of the house--occupies most of the north-west (rear) elevation of the main block and contains the kitchen, breakfast room, and service facilities. The 1910-1912 expansion of the house and later improvements have removed any appearance of the earlier 19th or 20th century fabric of the old dwelling. It is covered with a gabled roof set perpendicular to the main block. A bay window has been added in recent times to the southwest elevation as well as a false dormer gable. The dormer contains paired one-over-one sash windows. A shallower one-story block occupies the western end of the ell's northwest end and serves as the rear porch and service entry.

At the back of the property is a one-story frame garage covered with an off-center hipped roof. Two pairs of doors occupy its southwest elevation.

The interior of the house follows a center hall double-pile plan with a pair of parlors flanking the front hall. The center hall--perhaps originally one space--has been separated by a partition to form the entrance hall and a rear stair hall. The stair with square paneled newels is original although much of the 1910-1912 woodwork has been replaced on the first story in a series of alterations effected as the family's fortunes and taste changed. A dentil cornice has been installed in both parlors and the dining room to the right of the stair hall. An original four panel door set in a symmetrically molded surround with corner blocks remains in the left parlor (and connects to the bedroom suite behind it). The room to the left of the stair hall together with the sun room, bath and dressing rooms (set in the western end of the one-story ell immediately adjacent to the main block) form a first story suite for the present owner. A door at the back of the stair hall opens into the breakfast room set parallel to the main block. A door on its northwest wall opens into the kitchen.

The second story also follows a center hall, double pile plan with four bedrooms and a bathroom. Considerably more of the original early 20th century woodwork remains in place here. Two small wood mantels--flanking a flue opening for a stove--remain in place while a third in the room over the dining room has been replaced by a rococo composition mantel.

The third floor attic has been fitted with three bedrooms and a bathroom.

# 8. Significance

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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1910-1912      **Builder/Architect** John Wilson & Joe Dailey, builders

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Meekins House is a grand two-story with attic late-Queen Anne style house and the largest private residence on Roanoke Island. It was constructed in 1910-1912 by local builders John Wilson and Joe Dailey for Theodore S. Meekins and his family. In addition to its obvious architectural significance the house has important associations with the history of North Carolina's Outer Banks. The Meekins family is among the oldest on the Outer Banks, having lived there since the colonial period. Like members of other families who moved from the barrier islands to Roanoke Island or the mainland in the late 19th and early 20th century, Theodore Meekins moved from Rodanthe, Hatteras Island, to Roanoke Island in 1904. He purchased a small frame house and lived there until enlarging it, creating this impressive and well-detailed residence. Meekins was a contractor himself and in 1911 won the contract for the construction of the lifesaving station at Chicamacomico. He also held a number of political offices and owned a general merchandise store in Manteo. Meekins lived here until his death in 1952 after which the house was inherited by his son Theodore S. Meekins, Jr., whose widow is the owner of the house.

**Criteria Assessment:**

- B. The Meekins House is associated with the life of Theodore S. Meekins, Sr., a prominent business and political leader in Manteo and the contractor for the Chicamacomico lifesaving station. The Meekins family have long played an important role in the history of the Outer Banks.
- C. The Meekins house embodies the distinctive characteristics of the late-Queen Anne architecture of the early 20th century boasting an asymmetrical composition, three-story tower, shingled and bracketed gable fronts, and other features which add richness to this unusually well-preserved house.

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In 1904 Theodore S. Meekins purchased a lot in Manteo on Roanoke Island in Dare County. The lot was located at what is now 319 Sir Walter Raleigh Street.<sup>1</sup> Meekins had recently come to Manteo from Rodanthe on Hatteras Island where in 1896 he had been magistrate of Kinnakeet township.<sup>2</sup>

Meekins was a member of one of the Outer Banks' oldest families whose ancestors had inhabited the area since before the American Revolution.<sup>3</sup> In 1896 he had married the fifteen-year-old Rosa P. Midgett, and they subsequently had seven children, one of whom died in infancy.<sup>4</sup>

After coming to Manteo he worked as a contractor and may have used his experience in constructing his house on what was then County Street (later changed to Sir Walter Raleigh Street). Evidently a small structure was standing on the property when Meekins bought it, and he enlarged it several times and lived there until around 1910-1912. At that time he built the large house which now stands on the lot and used the original small dwelling (attached to the rear of the new building) as a kitchen and maid's room. When the new house was completed it had seventeen rooms and still remains the largest house on Roanoke Island. To build the new house Meekins hired his brother-in-law John Wilson and another local carpenter Joe Dailey. They had measurable experience in building, and had constructed several lighthouse keeper's houses and life-saving stations on the Outer Banks. They built the three story house in Manteo using as a model a photograph found by Rosa P. Meekins. Local tradition claims that Cramer Brothers Company of Elizabeth City milled the windows for the house, cut the building materials, and sent them to Roanoke Island by boat.<sup>5</sup>

Throughout his years in Manteo, Meekins earned a prominent local reputation and rendered considerable service in local and state government. In addition to being a magistrate, he served as clerk of the Dare County superior court in the early twentieth century. He was in the state legislature in 1945 and 1947.<sup>6</sup>

As a contractor he left his imprint upon the maritime history of the Outer Banks. In 1911 the United States government awarded him a contract to build a new lifesaving station at Chicamacomico near Rodanthe.<sup>7</sup> Since its construction the station has become one of the most famous lifesaving outposts in the history of the Coast Guard. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century the crews of the station made a number of daring rescues of shipwreck victims. These heroic feats included the spectacular rescue of the crew of the torpedoed British tanker Mirlo during World War I. At that time the heroism of the men at the station earned them rarely-awarded medals for valor and almost unprecedented recognition in the annals of the Coast Guard.<sup>8</sup> (The station still stands and is owned by the National Park Service which is preserving it as a maritime museum.)

In addition to being a successful contractor Meekins was a prosperous merchant and businessman. He owned significant amounts of real estate and operated a merchandise store on the waterfront in Manteo. Along with his partner Richard C. "Dick" Evans, he ran his store in the ground floor of the Roanoke Hotel building until the structure burned in the 1920s. He then built and opened another business across the street from where the first had stood. The new two story frame building was eventually sold to the Carson Davis family. It was in use as the Davis Department Store until the 1960s when

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the third major fire in Manteo's history destroyed the remaining original waterfront buildings in the town.<sup>9</sup>

Following Meekins's death in 1952 his house on Sir Walter Raleigh passed to his son Theodore S. Meekins, Jr., who died in 1959, leaving the property to his wife Goldie Harrell Meekins. She is retired from her job as director of social services for Dare County and still owns the house.<sup>10</sup>

The structure of course is closely related to the surrounding environment. Archeological 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 archeological record. Therefore, archeological 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.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Dare County Deed Books (microfilm), Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina, Deed Book K, 419, hereinafter cited as Dare Deed Book.

<sup>2</sup>John F. Wilson, IV, "Theodore S. Meekins House," an unpublished manuscript at Archeology and Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina, hereinafter cited as Wilson, "Theodore S. Meekins House"; Levi Branson (ed.), Branson's North Carolina Business Directory, 1896 (Raleigh: Levi Branson, 1866-1896, 7 volumes), VII, 224.

<sup>3</sup>David Stick, The Outer Banks, 1584-1958 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1958), 73, 315.

<sup>4</sup>Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900: Dare County, North Carolina, Population Schedule, 103 B, hereinafter cited as Dare County Census, 1900, Population Schedule; Wilson, "Theodore Meekins House," 2.

<sup>5</sup>Wilson, "Theodore S. Meekins House," 2.

<sup>6</sup>Dare County Census, 1900, Population Schedule, 103 B; John L. Cheney, Jr. (ed.), North Carolina Government, 1585-1974: A Narrative and Statistical History (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of the Secretary of State, 1975), 519, 521.

<sup>7</sup>U. S. Treasury Department - U. S. Coast Guard, "Report of Chicamacomico Life-saving Station," by Edwin C. Dearss, National Park Service historian, Federal Records (microfilm), Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina, Part I, p. 1.

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<sup>8</sup>Edwin C. Bearss, "The Mirlo Rescue," North Carolina Historical Review, XLV (October, 1968), 391-398.

<sup>9</sup>Wilson, "Theodore S. Meekins House," 1; Telephone interview of Joe A. Mobley with John F. Wilson, IV, August 22, 1980.

<sup>10</sup>Dare County Will Books (microfilm), Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina, Will Book 3, p. 373; 4, p. 337.

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- Bearss, Edwin C. "The Mirlo Rescue." North Carolina Historical Review, XLV. October, 1968.
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- Cheney, John, Jr. (ed.). North Carolina Government, 1585-1974: A Narrative and Statistical History. Raleigh: North Carolina Department of the Secretary of State, 1975.
- Dare County Records (microfilm). Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina. Subgroups: Deeds, Wills.
- Stick, David. The Outer Banks, 1584-1958. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1958.
- Telephone interview of Joe A. Mobley with John F. Wilson, IV. August 22, 1980.
- U. S. Bureau of the Census. Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900. Dare County, North Carolina, Population Schedule.
- U. S. Treasury Department - U. S. Coast Guard. "Report of Chicamacomico Lifesaving Station." Edwin C. Bearss, National Park Service historian. Federal Records (micorfilm), Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.
- Wilson, John F., IV. "Theodore S. Meekins House." An unpublished manuscript at Archeology and Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Manteo

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 

1	8	4	3	9	2	1	9	1	0	3	1	9	7	1	3	8	1	3	1	0
Zone		Easting				Northing														

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing														

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing														

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing														

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing														

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing														

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing														

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing														

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The property included in this nomination is the less than one acre lot located at 319 Sir Walter Raleigh Street and entirely enclosed within a white picket fence.

See sketch map of property. Lot is approximately 9500 square feet.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
-------	-----	------	--------	-----	------

state	code	county	code
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# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Architectural description: Davyd F. Hood, Survey Specialist	Historical Statement: Joe Mobley, Researcher
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organization	Survey and Planning Branch Archaeology and Historic Preservation	date	September, 1980
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street & number	N.C. Division of Archives and History 109 E. Jones Street	telephone	(919) 733-6545
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city or town	Raleigh	state	North Carolina
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# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national     state     local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *John J. Little*

*Deputy*  
title State Historic Preservation Officer

date *20 October 1982*

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

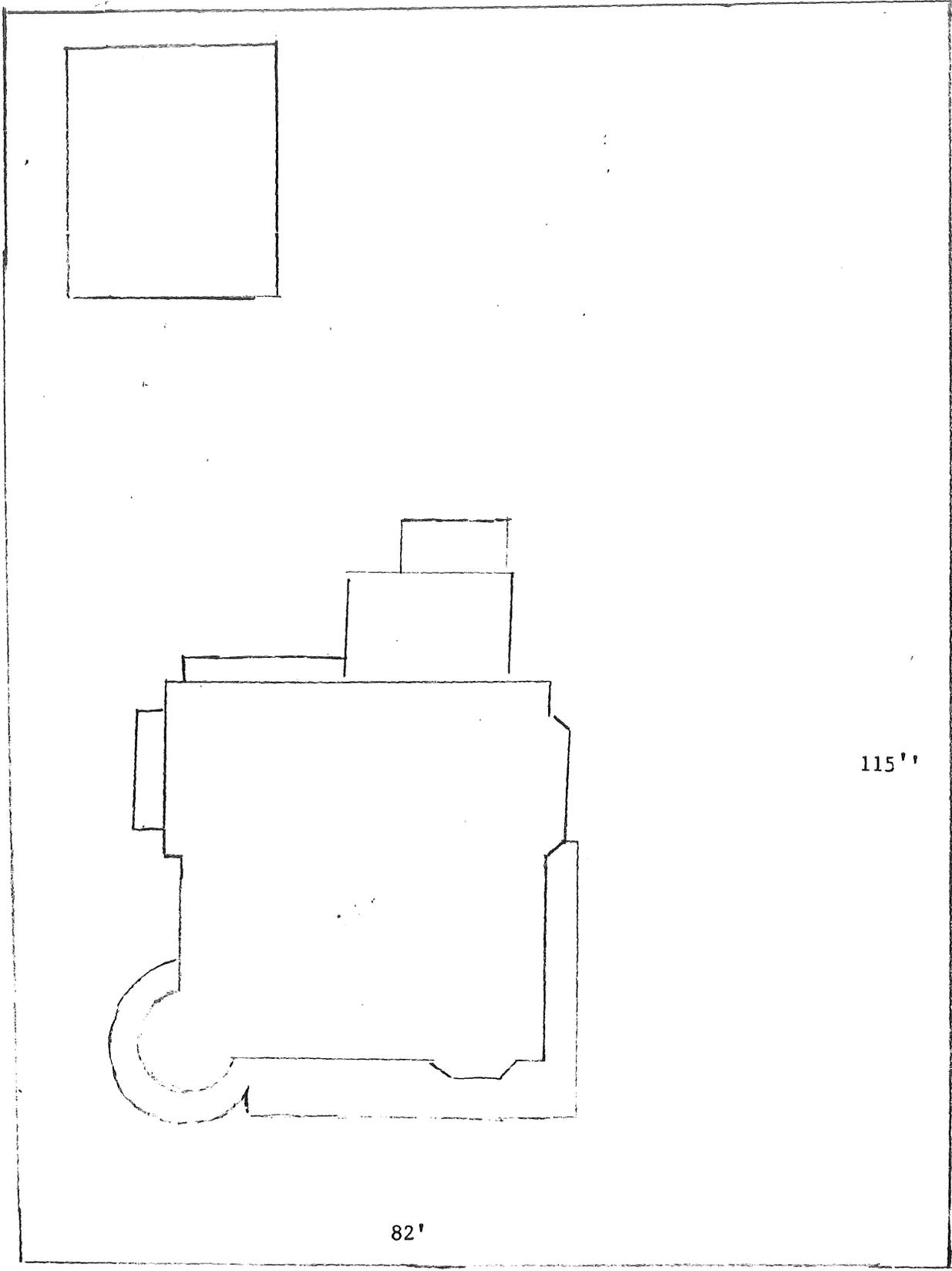
date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

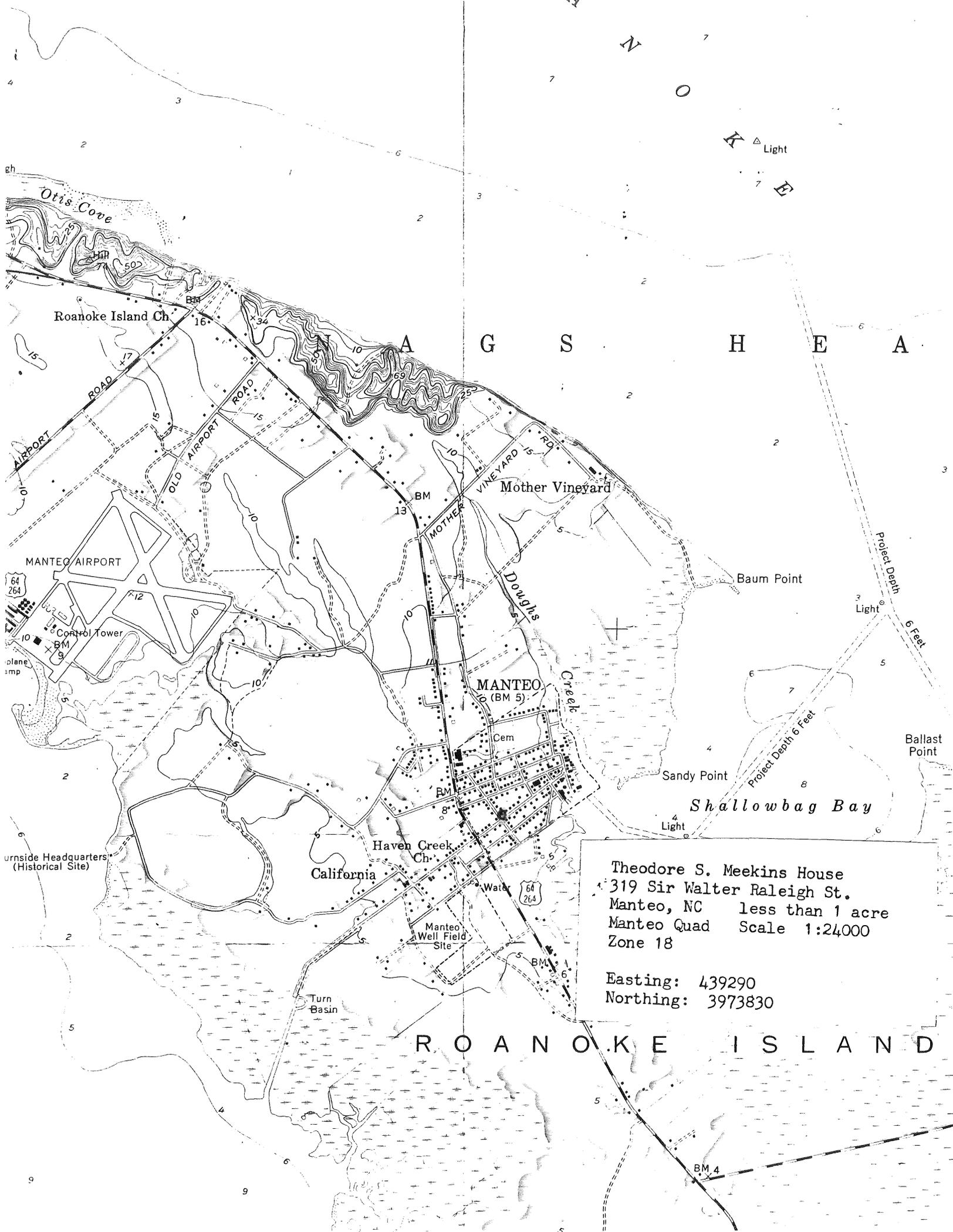


Uppowac St.

115'

82'

Sir Walter Raleigh Street



Theodore S. Meekins House  
 319 Sir Walter Raleigh St.  
 Manteo, NC less than 1 acre  
 Manteo Quad Scale 1:24000  
 Zone 18

Easting: 439290  
 Northing: 3973830

R O A N O K E I S L A N D

