United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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

1. Name

Historic Rural Hall Depot

And/or common

2. Location

Southwest side of Depot Street (SR 1646) southeast of intersection
street & number with Second Street (SR 1645).

City, town Rural Hall vicinity of

State N. C. code 037 County Forsyth code 067

3. Classification

<table>
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4. Owner of Property

Name Mr. D. J. Redding, Jr.

Street & number Post Office Box 518

City, town Rural Hall vicinity of State N. C. 27045

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of Register of Deeds, Forsyth County Hall of Justice

Street & number

City, town Winston-Salem State N. C.

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title From Frontier to Factory, 1981 has this property been determined eligible? yes x no

date

Federal x State county local

depository for survey records Survey and Planning Branch, Division of Archives and History

City, town Raleigh State N. C. 27611
The Rural Hall Depot is a one-story rectangular frame building measuring twenty-three feet in width and seventy-eight feet in length sheathed with 5½ inch German siding of Southern yellow pine. The building's gabled roof is supported by triangular brackets with shaped edges symmetrically spaced along the northeast and southwest side elevations and northwest and southeast gable ends. The metal shingle roof, pierced by a pair of brick flue stacks, terminates at each gable end with modest cresting. A rectangular sign panel in the center of each gable end bears the name of the town, Rural Hall. The building rests on a low brick and partial basement foundation. A sill board carries around the bottom of the building and serves as a base for the elevations and for the corner pilasters which enframe the elevations. Most of the siding is original; however, some has been replaced where damaged or deteriorated. In plan the building has a three part division with the waiting rooms in the northwest end, the station master's office in the center of the building, and the freight room/warehouse at the southeast end. The station is located between the parallel tracks of the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railroad to the east and the Richmond and Danville Railroad on the west.

Entrances into the white and colored waiting rooms are set in the northwest gable end. The original four (and raised) panel doors are surmounted by transoms and enframed in plain board surrounds. The northeast side elevation has a trio of symmetrically spaced windows (illuminating the white waiting room) at its north end and a pair of large eight feet by eight feet square--openings into the freight room at the east end of the elevation. The window openings here and elsewhere in the building contain six-over-six sashes. The large single doors over the warehouse openings are fitted on rollers and slide into the space between the exterior and interior walls. These doors and three additional warehouse doors each have eight triangular panels formed by applied battens running from top to bottom and side to side through the center of the door face and secondary battens carrying through the door's center from the corners diagonally opposite each other. The panel field is sheathed with flush tongue and groove ceiling. Curiously the seven by eight feet door in the southeast gable end and the two doors on the side elevations nearest it are sheathed with diagonally applied ceiling while the fourth and fifth doors--nearest the center of the building are sheathed with vertically applied ceiling.

The southwest side elevation has an uneven disposition of doors and windows whose location reflects the interior spaces. At the east end of the elevation are a pair of doors opposite the paired doors on the northeast elevation. These too open into the freight room. There is a standard door opening with a four (and raised) panel door at the near center of the elevation which opens into the freight room. Immediately to the north is a three-sided bay window which illuminates the station master's office. Its projection from the facade of the station allowed the station master to see arriving trains. At the west end of the elevation are a pair of symmetrically spaced windows illuminating the colored waiting room.

The colored and white waiting rooms comprising the northwest end of the building and each measuring ten feet eight inches by twenty-two feet six inches are sheathed with beaded tongue and groove ceiling. A simple chair rail carries around the rooms at a height of about four feet. The flue stack for stoves is fitted into the partition walls.
between the waiting rooms. The station master's office is located in the center of the station behind the bay window. The office measures twenty-three feet in depth and nine feet ten inches in width. It too is sheathed with beaded tongue and groove ceiling and has an applied chair rail. The floors in the waiting rooms and office were originally pine but have since been covered with random width oak flooring. The partition wall between the white waiting room and office containing the ticket window was removed by the railroad company. However, the ticket window for colored people, measuring twenty inches, remains in place. It is covered with a two-panel door which can be raised upward between the walls. A shelf carries across the bottom of the window. The inside of the bay window in the office has a pine board shelf at desk height. It is original and retains several holes drilled to accommodate wires for telegraph senders and receivers. The shelf desk has one center drawer. In the southeast corner of the room is a flight of four steps up to the freight warehouse—elevated some thirty-two inches above the office floor. In the southwest corner of the office is a stair which descends to a basement under the freight warehouse. The freight room is twenty-three feet deep and fifty-two feet long. It was originally sheathed with oak boards only to a height of four feet with the remainder of the elevations and roof construction exposed.

During Mr. Redding's rehabilitation of the building for offices he installed a secondary wall behind each of the sliding doors into the freight room and inserted windows holding twelve over twelve sash in the center of the openings. He also installed a door beside the window in the opening at the southeast gable end to serve as the principal entrance into the freight room which is now used as the printing office of The Independent, a small local weekly newspaper edited by Pat Kelly. Redding maintained the presence of the sliding doors on the northeast and southwest side elevations by drawing them over a third of the opening up to the edge of the windows. The secondary, infill walls are covered with a siding similar to that covering the depot.

The warehouse section of the depot was originally encircled by a loading platform. It was taken down prior to the move in 1980. Recalling the spirit of the platform is a shallow stoop carrying across the openings on the northeast side elevation with steps at its eastern end. A similar platform/porch carries across the southeast gable end and wraps the building's south corner to continue along the southwest elevation of the freight room. There are wood steps at both ends of this platform. Below the platform at the building's southeast gable end is an entrance into the partial basement installed under the building when the move was made.

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Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The old Rural Hall Depot, in the Rural Hall Community of northern Forsyth County, was completed early in 1888 for the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railway. It survives as one of the oldest railroad stations in western North Carolina. During the following year, it also came to serve the Richmond and Danville Railroad, whose tracks passed along the opposite side of the structure. From the late 1880s until the mid-1950s the old Rural Hall Depot served both the freight and passenger trains which passed through the community on a regular basis. The structure is intimately associated with the coming of the railroad to Rural Hall and with the subsequent growth and development which the railroad helped to bring about. After the cessation of passenger service in 1955, the old depot continued to provide services and facilities to freight trains until its closing in 1980. Saved from scheduled demolition, the old depot was moved 26 March 1980 to a new but very similar site approximately 200 feet from its original location. It has now been restored and a part of it has been opened as a local railroad museum.

Criteria Assessment:

A. One of the oldest surviving railroad depots in western North Carolina, the Rural Hall Depot, is associated with the growth of rail transportation in the late-nineteenth century. The depot represents the single most significant event in the community, the coming of the railroad, which was primarily responsible for the industrial development and growth of the town of Rural Hall.

B. The Rural Hall Depot is one of a small number of surviving buildings erected by the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railroad.

C. The Rural Hall Depot is a representative example of the small town stations which housed freight and passenger services in a single building. The simple, frame building, exhibiting the functional purposes for which it was built, is enlivened with paneled doors and bracketed eaves. It is the oldest commercial building in the town of Rural Hall.
The old Rural Hall Depot is located in the heart of the Rural Hall Community of northern Forsyth County. The Rural Hall area, very near the boundary between Forsyth and Stokes counties, was settled during and just after the American Revolution by pioneer families of predominantly German extraction. The Nazareth Lutheran Church at Rural Hall (formerly the "Old Dutch Meeting House") was organized as early as 1778, and by 1818 a community of some twenty families had developed around it. Prior to the coming of the railroad in the late 1880s, this early community remained very small, with little commercial or industrial development. Indeed, during the years just following the Civil War, one B. L. Bitting was listed as Rural Hall's only merchant. It was apparently not until the early 1880s that a post office was established at Rural Hall. The coming of the railroad, however, was to provide a long-term stimulus to the community's gradual growth and development.

As early as 1874 a group of Mount Airy businessmen had organized the Mount Airy Narrow Gauge Railway Company, with the object of laying a narrow gauge track from Mount Airy southeastward to Greensboro. Others conceived a plan of extending this line from Greensboro to Fayetteville. With the passage of time these complementary schemes resulted in the formation of the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railway, with standard gauge lines which extended from the sea at Wilmington, northwestward across North Carolina to the base of the Blue Ridge Mountains at Mount Airy.

By 1884 the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railway had been extended as far as Greensboro, and work was begun on the seventy-mile section from Greensboro through Rural Hall to Mount Airy, an area of productive soils and abundant natural resources. By 16 May 1888 this last section of track was completed, and on 20 June of the same year the first passenger train passed through Rural Hall en route to the line's northern terminus.

The old Rural Hall Depot was constructed for the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railway on land formally conveyed to the company on 31 January 1888 by Mrs. Elizabeth Bitting Payne and by the prominent merchant and farmer B. L. Bitting and wife Mary. Each of these two transactions conveyed to the railroad one acre of the "lot marked Depot Lot on the map of Rural Hall ... date/d/ Dec. 6th, 1887." The map of Rural Hall mentioned in these deeds had been drawn by the general superintendent of the railroad, J. W. Frye.

Construction of the Rural Hall Depot must have begun well before the formal acquisition of the site, for the new facility was opened for business on 15 January 1888, some four months before the tracks were to reach their ultimate destination at Mount Airy. The new station's first agent was yet another member of the Bitting family, Mr. Z. B. Bitting.

As track construction progressed rapidly from Rural Hall to Mount Airy, more and more of the abundant agricultural and forest products of the area were processed for shipment by rail. Especially important among these products were various grain crops, tobacco, fruit, and lumber. With the completion of the line, convenient transport was also provided for the granite drawn from the enormous quarry near Mount Airy.

In 1889 yet another railroad was extended through Rural Hall, with its tracks lying on the opposite side of the depot from those of the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railway. By mid-February of that year the Richmond and Danville Railroad had laid its tracks a mile and a half past Rural Hall, as construction continued on a line extending from...
Winston westward to Wilkesboro. After considerable delay, this line was completed during the winter of 1889-1890; however, the first passenger train on this line had reached as far as Rural Hall on 25 March 1889. It is significant to note that this train also made connections at Rural Hall with the northbound afternoon train on the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railway. The coming together of these two trains was duly noted by a passenger and contributor to the Union Republican of Winston:

On Monday evening, March 25, 1889, by invitation of Mr. Geo. W. Hinshaw, we had the pleasure of being among those who were passengers on the first train on the Wilkesboro Extension from Winston to Rural Hall, the point of juncture with the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railroad. The train left the depot here at 8:15 to connect with the train on the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley for Mt. Airy, which is due at Rural Hall at 4:20. The train was in charge of Capt. L. M. Hawkins, a little fellow of about 280 pounds avoirdupois, with some 15 years experience in the service of the Richmond and Danville Company. . . . The ride was a delightful one and through one of the finest farming sections in the county of Forsyth.  

For many years thereafter the Rural Hall Depot was to serve as a layover for passengers transferring between the two lines.

The coming of the railroad served as a catalyst to the modest growth and economic development of the Rural Hall Community. In a special Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railway edition of 22 March 1890, the Wilmington Messenger reported that a steam sawmill and two dwellings had been erected along the railroad at Rural Hall between 1 June 1888 and 1 January 1890. 11 In 1890 Rural Hall had three merchant establishments, but a population of only twenty-five persons; in 1896 there remained three merchants in the community, but the population had increased to 105. 12 By the latter year Rural Hall also boasted a school, the Rural Hall Academy, and a hotel, the Kiser House, with E. L. Kiser proprietor. 13 In 1895 Rural Hall was established as a township; but four years later it became, once again, a part of the restored Bethania Township. 14 The presence of the railroad eventually brought about the development of several industrial facilities, including a stove factory, a broom factory, an excelsior factory, a box shop, a tobacco factory, a roller mill, and a toilet seat factory. 15 In addition, the growing prosperity of Rural Hall resulted in the construction of several fine residences around the turn of the century and in the building of seven churches within a period of thirty-four years. 16

In 1893-1894 the Richmond and Danville Railroad fell victim to financial difficulties and was reorganized as the Southern Railway Company. A few years later, in 1897, the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railway was also taken over and restructured, with the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad purchasing the lower portion of the line from Wilmington to Sanford and the Southern Railway Company acquiring the remainder of the line from Sanford to Mount Airy. For several years this line was operated as a division of the Southern Railway Company as the Atlantic and Yadkin Railroad. 17

From the late 1880s until the mid-1950s both freight and passenger trains passed regularly through Rural Hall. At the peak of railroad operations, it is reported that eight passenger trains came through the community on a daily basis. In addition to serving the needs of freight and passenger service, the old Rural Hall Depot also provided telegraph and money order service. 18 During the late nineteenth and early
twentieth centuries, the old Rural Hall Depot was a point of disembarkation for passengers en route to the resort hotels of Vade Mecum and Moore's Springs in the nearby Sauratown Mountains:

Since Rural Hall was the nearest railroad station to the mountain springs, there blossomed a thriving transient tourist business, especially in summer. From east and west came vacationers... to rent a house and buggy in Rural Hall, or catch a stage coach to the mountains. Many businessmen and resort seekers spent the night in the Rural Hall Hotel which stood for nearly 60 years beside the railroad tracks.19

It was during the summer of 1955 that the last passenger train passed through Rural Hall, on a final trip westward to Wilkesboro.20 Despite the loss of passenger service, however, freight trains continued to serve the transportation needs of local business and industry. By 1960 Rural Hall, though still a small town, had developed into the third largest manufacturing center in Forsyth County, behind Winston-Salem and Kernersville.21 Freight service still continues through Rural Hall with the Southern Railway Company. Both the Mount Airy and Wilkesboro lines are reported to be profitable ones.22

After ninety-two years of continuous service, the old Rural Hall Depot was judged to be outdated, and the Southern Railway Company erected a new station to take its place. The new brick depot, just to the north of its predecessor, was opened for business on 25 March 1980; and plans had already been laid to demolish the old depot. The impending destruction of the old depot, however, had roused considerable local support for its preservation. Many of the citizens of Rural Hall felt a personal or sentimental attachment to the building which had played so important a role in the history of the community. Moreover, the building was valued because it was one of the oldest frame structures of any kind still standing in Rural Hall. As a result of this local support, funds were provided to relocate the old depot approximately 200 feet south of its original location, to the property of D. J. Redding Jr. The new site is very similar to the former one, the tracks of the two railroad lines still passing on opposite sides of the building, as they have for nearly a century.23

In addition to providing the property on which the old depot now stands, Mr. Redding has personally undertaken and completed the restoration of the structure. The restoration of both the interior and exterior was completed in December of 1981. The building now houses a large collection of railroad memorabilia, collected by the Redding family, and is open to the public as a local railroad museum.24
FOOTNOTES

1 Highway historical marker files, Nazareth Church folder, Research Branch, Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina; and Adelaide L. Fries and others, Forsyth: A County on the March (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1949), 129-130. Fries gives the date of organization as 1785. The present church building was constructed in 1878.


3 Winston-Salem Journal and Sentinel, 28 June 1931.

4 The Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railway (From Mt. Airy, At the Base of the Blue Ridge to Wilmington, N. C.). (Philadelphia: Allen, Lane, and Scott, Printers, 1889), 10, 13, and 93.

5 Winston-Salem Journal and Sentinel, 28 June 1931.

6 Forsyth County Deeds, Book 94, pp. 588-599 and 590-591. These deeds were not registered until March of 1909.


9 The Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railway, 93 and 98; and Winston-Salem Journal and Sentinel, 28 June 1931.

10 Union Republican (Winston), 28 March 1889, quoted in Redding, "History of Rural Hall Depot," 6-7.

11 Wilmington Messenger, 22 March 1890.


14 Charles N. Siewers, Forsyth County: Economic and Social (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1924), 21-22.
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

Continuation sheet

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<th>HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE</th>
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17. **Winston-Salem Journal and Sentinel**, 28 June 1931; and brochure commemorating the ninety-fourth anniversary of the Rural Hall Depot, submitted by D. J. Redding Jr. and accompanying his "History of the Rural Hall Depot."


24. Information supplied by D. J. Redding Jr., accompanying his "History of the Rural Hall Depot."
# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheets.

# 10. Geographical Data

| Acreage of nominated property | less than 1 acre |
| Quadrangle name | Rural Hall |
| Quadrangle scale | 1:24000 |

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**Verbal boundary description and justification**

The property included in this nomination consists of lots 18, 19A, 19B, and 21, Block 4904, Map 34, Bethania Township, Forsyth County, as outlined on a copy of attached map.

## 11. Form Prepared By

**Architectural description by** Davyd Foard Hood and D. J. Redding, Jr.; **historical research** by Wilson Angley; **Criteria Assessment** by Davyd Foard Hood

**organization** Division of Archives and History

**street & number** 109 East Jones Street

**city or town** Raleigh

**state** N. C.

**telephone** 27611

**date**

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

- [x] 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 National Park Service.

**State Historic Preservation Officer signature**

William J. Peeples

**title** State Historic Preservation Officer

**date**

**For NPS use only**

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

**Keeper of the National Register**

**Attest:**

**Chief of Registration**

The Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railway (From Mt. Airy, At the Base of the Blue Ridge to Wilmington, N. C.). Philadelphia: Allen, Lane and Scott, Printers, 1889.

Documented typescript history and other materials supplied by D. J. Redding, Jr. Rural Hall Depot file, Survey Branch, Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

Forsyth County Deeds.


Highway Historical marker files, Nazareth Church folder, Research Branch, Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

Newspapers

Mount Airy News
People's Press (Salem)
Twin City Sentinel (Winston-Salem)
Union Republican (Winston)
Wilmington Messenger
Winston-Salem Journal and Sentinel


RURAL HALL QUADRANGLE
NORTH CAROLINA-FORSYTH CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

Rural Hall Depot
Rural Hall Quadrangle
Zone 17 Scale 1:24000
17 563120/4010980