

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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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 L. D. Giddens and Son Jewelry Store

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

135 South Center Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Goldsboro

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

3rd

STATE

North Carolina

VICINITY OF

37

COUNTY

Wayne

CODE

191

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mr. Marvin L. Smoot, Jr.

STREET & NUMBER

250 S. Hillcrest Drive

CITY, TOWN

Goldsboro

STATE

VICINITY OF

North Carolina 27530

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Wayne County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Goldsboro

STATE

North Carolina

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Community Appearance Study

DATE

1974

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

City of Goldsboro, Planning Department

CITY, TOWN

Goldsboro

STATE

North Carolina

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" 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		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

L. D. Giddens and Son Jewelry Store, the oldest continuous business in the city of Goldsboro, was founded in 1859. Located on the northwest side of South Center Street, the main thoroughfare of the central business district, the structure is flanked by Weil's Department Store on the north side and the Paramount Theatre on the south side. The building had been constructed probably at some point between the completion of the railroad in 1839 and the incorporation of the city in 1847, a period during which most of the construction immediately adjacent to the railroad tracks was developed. It was not until 1868 that Mr. Giddens purchased the building from the estate of Richard Washington, a prominent Goldsboro and Waynesborough merchant.

Constructed to a size of 104 feet long and 23½ feet wide, the building is three bays wide; the store encompasses 2,000 square feet of space on the main floor. Originally, the store was a two-story brick building with simple wooden shutters. The current facade reflects modifications of several renovations from ca. 1870, 1926 and 1959.

The first floor of the facade is of red brick, with broad glass display windows and a recessed glass door, a product of the 1959 Centennial Celebration renovation. Masonry and cast-iron panels compose the outer edges of the facade. Cast-iron ornaments are in the form of flat, stylized pilasters. Above the display windows, stretching across the expanse of the facade, is a leaded glass tile transom, with the name Giddens inlaid in stained glass. Above the transom is a cast-iron cornice.

The second floor is divided into three bays by a series of windows and more cast-iron ornamentation. A series of pilasters, more classical in design than those on the first floor, frame the windows. These pilasters have fan-shaped bottoms and Corinthian capitals; above the windows are flat panels decorated with rosettes and beading. The cornice line of the building is composed of cast-iron panels embellished with brackets, beading and molding.

Previously, the cornice had been topped by a triangular-shaped parapet, which was damaged and subsequently removed in the 1948 fire that destroyed the adjacent Weil Brothers store. The sloped, shed-type roof is made of galvanized tin.

A freestanding clock marks the curb line in front of Giddens, and it is believed to be the last remaining one of its kind in North Carolina. Approximately 14 feet high, the base is of concrete, the shaft a carved wooden post, and the clock itself is a hexagonal shape framed by a circular wooden molding. The face of the clock is crowned by a finial and two arabesques. Erected on June 18, 1877, the clock was electrified in 1924.

The store's interior is rectangular in plan, with the long sides banked by mahogany show tables and wall units. The show tables were original to the store; six of the mahogany wall cases were made in Baltimore and installed prior to 1924, while a seventh wall case and two arches were duplicated in Goldsboro and installed prior to 1930. The wall cases have glass panels which draw up through the top of the case and rest above them. Pressed tin panels compose the ceiling and have been painted black. At the rear of the selling floor a mahogany archway leads to the rear showroom area, a

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storage room and offices beyond. The storage room and offices were part of the 1959 renovation. Originally a staircase on the side next to Weil's led to the second floor, however, it has since been removed and discarded. Once used for offices, the second floor has simple wooden floors, plaster walls and ceilings, and is presently used for storage.

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/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES ca. 1850, 1868 BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The "parlor" jewelry store of L. D. Giddens and Son, founded in 1859, is the oldest continuous business in the city of Goldsboro, and may be the oldest jewelry store in of North Carolina. As it stands today, the shop at 135 South Center Street has endured the passing of the railroads, fire, war and depressions to become an integral part of the revitalization efforts for the central business district. As an example of nineteenth century commercial architecture, the current facade reflects elements from various eras; however, it has retained the decorative elements of the cast-iron architecture so popular in nineteenth century construction. It also reflects the continuity of the business within one family throughout several generations. The freestanding clock in front of the store is believed to be the last of its kind in the state. Erected in 1877, the clock was electrified in 1924.

Criteria Assessment:

- (A) Associated with the continuous economic development of the city of Goldsboro and Wayne County.
- (B) Associated with the lives of the Giddens family and their descendents, one of the first families to have settled in Goldsboro.
- (C) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of nineteenth century commercial architectural styles of the cast-iron era and the freestanding street clock represents the advertising trend of that period. This is the only such clock known to survive in the state, since Baxter's clock in New Bern was hit by a truck.

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Giddens "parlor" jewelry store was founded in¹ 1859 by Louis Devereaux Giddens when he purchased the interests of J. H. Crawford. Originally from Sampson County, born in 1835, Giddens arrived in Goldsboro in the late 1850s. The city of Goldsboro, incorporated in 1847, was in the process of rapid growth and expansion attributed to the development of the railroads in eastern North Carolina. For over 50 years the tracks of the Wilmington and Weldon (Atlantic Coastline) as well as the North Carolina railroads bisected the middle of Center Street and stimulated the economic climate of the adjacent locations. So successful was the business, that by the turn of the century Giddens was advertised as the "parlor" jewelry store.² This term served to describe the great degree of comfort and privacy afforded to the customers as they perused the high quality merchandise.

At first the shop at 135 South Center Street housed two businesses, and in 1861 when Mr. Giddens went to war, he³ asked his fellow merchant, Mr. Eason, to look after his business while he was away. Mr. Giddens enlisted in Company E, 20th North Carolina Regiment on October 23, 1861. He served as a musician⁴ in the regimental band until his parole at Petersburg, Virginia on April 3, 1865.

Upon his return to Goldsboro, he once again tended to his jewelry business. In January of 1866 he married Margaret L. Ireland of Erin Plantation, near Faison, North Carolina. By 1873 their family had grown to necessitate their move to a larger home at 209⁵ South William Street, and the family subsequently resided there for over 100 years.

When the shop opened in 1859, it contained a solid walnut regulator clock, mahogany showcase tables, a small felt topped desk and a large safe. These objects are still there today. Early photographs, ca. 1877, show the simple two-story brick building with wooden shutters flanked by the Grange Store and J. B. Whitaker, a book and job printer. It is thought that between 1870 and 1880, renovation of the exterior facade was undertaken to keep in stride with the physical changes on Center Street. In 1870, H. Weil and Brothers had purchased the adjoining lot and constructed a new two-story building which they subsequently advertised as the "Iron Front."⁶ Exterior materials were brick masonry and fluted, cast-iron columns. It is from this time that the cast-iron ornamentation, still present on the Giddens store facade, is dated.

On June 18, 1877, a freestanding clock was erected in front of the store.⁷ Believed to be the last of its type in the state, its various parts have been replaced over the years. In 1911, the original post of the clock was replaced by an exact replica made of a "fat light wood log."⁸ A copy of the Goldsboro Mirror, along with a list of those who witnessed the erection of the clock, was reportedly found in the base when the clock was dismantled for repairs.⁹ However, this information was not found when more recently the clock was dismantled¹⁰ after being hit by a truck. The wooden base has been replaced by a concrete one.

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Louis D. Giddens is reported to have made the first watch in the state of North Carolina and in recognition of this achievement he was awarded the highest honor at the 1871 Wilmington Fair as well as a medal and a diploma from the 1874 State Fair in Raleigh.¹¹ His mechanical ability was widely known and "he was remembered as one of the few people who could take a seasoned log and an ax and cut free-handed the large wooden screw needed for the mule-powered cotton presses."¹²

His three sons grew up helping in the family business, and subsequently attended specialty schools to further their education. Louis, Jr., graduated from the Parson's Horological Institute in LaPorte, Indiana; Frank graduated from Furgerson's College of Optics in New York; and Ross went to the Waltham Horological School in Waltham, Mass. Regarding their accomplishments, it has been said, "While at school, Ross made a rectangular watch 'different from anything that had been made at that time.' All three became excellent engravers. Louis engraved the alphabet on the head of a straight pin. Frank was known for the bird dogs and hunting scenes on shotguns."¹³

In 1897 Mr. Giddens read in the New York Journal of the rescue of a Cuban lady from the Recojides prison in Havana. So moved by the article he sent her a cut glass and silver powder jar, upon whose top was engraved a prison window by his son Louis, Jr.¹⁴

Louis, Jr., served as a 1st. Lt. with the First North Carolina Volunteers (revived Company B Goldsboro Rifles) during the Spanish American War.¹⁵ After the war, he married and had a family.¹⁶ For a time prior to World War I, he had a jewelry store in nearby Wilson.

Ross Giddens remained at home with the family business and was made a partner shortly before his father's death in 1909. He became owner of the store upon his mother's death in 1915.¹⁷ In 1924 he remodeled the store temporarily relocating to Robinson's Drug Store "where floor space had been rented 'for the duration' so the business could carry on."¹⁸ In 1931, Ross died and left the store to his sister, Mary Emma.¹⁹ She prevailed upon her sister Margaret's son,²⁰ Marvin L. Smoot, Jr., to help her with the business and later to become partner.

Marvin married in 1934 and had three sons, two of whom Marvin L. III, and George, joined the firm in 1961 and 1972, respectively. They remain active in the business today.²¹

Giddens has not been without its share of near disasters. In February 1948, during a severe ice and snow storm, a fire leveled Weil's Department Store next door and threatened Giddens. However, the double tin roof was credited with saving the store as well as the Paramount Theatre, Robinson's Drug Store and all the buildings to the south. Previous attempts to fix a roof leak had failed, so an additional tin

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roof was erected two feet above the leaky one. The heat of the fire had been so intense that the tin roof on Weil's buckled and rolled over on to Giddens roof. At this point the wood frame of the triangular parapet caught fire and was irreparably damaged. In spite of this dire situation, the store was only closed one day due to extensive smoke damage.

The year 1959 signaled the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the founding of Giddens Jewelry Store. The store was remodeled, and a forty-four-foot rear extension was added for a stock room. The merchandise was removed from the shelves, and the showcases and windows served as a temporary museum of items brought to the store that had been purchased there throughout the stores' history. Represented were "the families from all the surrounding area (who) brought back the tokens of love, friendship and esteem that had been purchased from Giddens 50, 75 or 100 years before to share them and their histories with those interested in the Centennial."²² Also many companies which had dealt with the store sent collections of antiques and unusual jewelry for display. In honor of this event, the store presented to the City of Goldsboro a silver punch bowl, tray and ladle in appreciation for their successful 100 year association.

Giddens has enjoyed a lucrative and prominent location in that Center Street has remained the commercial heart of the central business district. However, this asset has suffered to some extent in recent times due to the decline of the downtown area. With the advent of a strong downtown revitalization project, it is to be anticipated that today, as nearly one-hundred and twenty years ago, Giddens will continue to serve as the "parlor" jewelry store, and still reflect very much the observations made in 1914:

This beautiful store is replete with rich and rare statuary, cut glass and other objects of art, in addition to the regular stock of fashionable jewelry, high grade watches, clocks, diamonds and other precious stones. This store affords giftseekers such an infinite variety of suitable and acceptable articles that one would be most fastidious indeed who could not find just the correct thing.

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Footnotes

- ¹ Goldsboro News-Argus, July 4, 1976. Article based on information held by family.
- ² Ibid.
- ³ Marvin L. Smoot, Jr., interview, July 18, 1978.
- ⁴ Weymouth T. Jordan, Jr., and Louis H. Manarin, comps., North Carolina Troops: A Roster, Vol. VI (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, 1977), p. 435 and p. 479.
- ⁵ Goldsboro News-Argus, July 4, 1976.
- ⁶ Moses Rountree, Strangers in the Land (Philadelphia: Dorrance and Company, 1969), p. 7.
- ⁷ Goldsboro News-Argus, July 4, 1976.
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ Marvin L. Smoot, Jr., interview, July 18, 1978.
- ¹¹ Goldsboro News-Argus, July 4, 1976.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ Marvin L. Smoot, Jr., interview July 18, 1978.
- ¹⁷ Wayne County Record of Wills, Office of the Clerk of Superior Court, Wayne County Courthouse, Will Book 3:581, 1435, hereinafter cited as Wayne Will Books.
- ¹⁸ Goldsboro News-Argus, July 4, 1976.
- ¹⁹ Wayne Will Book 6:498, 2001.
- ²⁰ Marvin L. Smoot, Jr., interview, July 18, 1978.

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²¹Ibid.

²²Goldsboro News-Argus, July 4, 1976.

²³The C. E. Weaver Series, Illustrated Cities: Goldsboro, North Carolina
(Richmond: Central Publishing Company, Inc., 1914), p. 17.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- City of Goldsboro Department of Planning. Community Appearance Study. Goldsboro: 1974.
Goldsboro News-Argus. February 10, 1948; July 4, 1976.
- Jordan, Jr., Weymouth T. and Manarin, Louis H., compilers. North Carolina Troops, 1861-1865: A Roster. Five volumes. Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, 1973.
- Rountree, Moses. Strangers in the Land. Philadelphia: Dorrance and Company, 1969.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre (narrow city lot occupied by building, including sidewalk and clock)

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 7	2, 2, 7, 5, 7, 5	3, 9, 1, 9, 3, 7, 5	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE Description and Significance prepared by Barbara Hammond, Consultant, Goldsboro for Archeology and Historic Preservation Section, Survey and Planning Branch

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Division of Archives and History

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

109 East Jones Street

(919) 733-4763

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Raleigh

North Carolina 27611

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

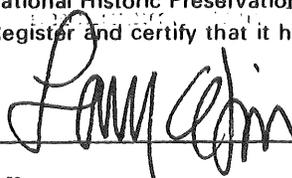
NATIONAL

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE



TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE January 11, 1979

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I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Smoot, III, Marvin L. Interview, July 18, 1978.

Smoot, Jr., Marvin L. Interview, August 17, 1978.

The C. E. Weaver Series. Illustrated Cities: Goldsboro, North Carolina. Richmond:
Central Publishing Company, In., 1914.

Wayne County Records. Wayne County Courthouse. Goldsboro, North Carolina. (Subgroups:
Deeds, Wills).



L. D. Giddens and Son Jewelry Store
 135 South Center Street, Goldsboro,
 Wayne County, North Carolina

UTM Reference
 17/227575/3919375

