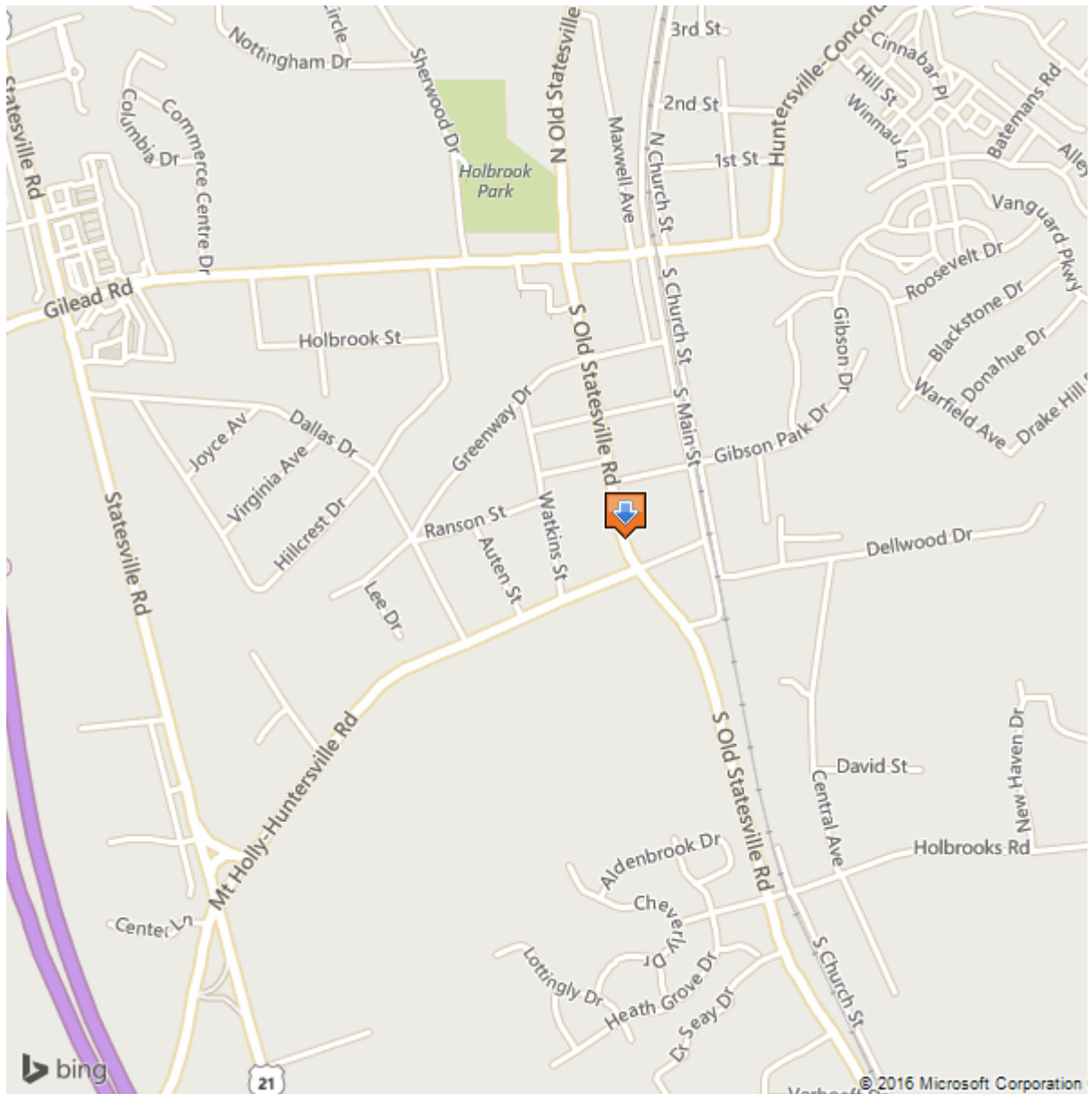


SURVEY AND RESEARCH REPORT ON THE RANSON HOUSE



1. **Name and location of the property:** The property known as the Ranson House is located at 412 S. Old Statesville Road in Huntersville, North Carolina.
2. **Name, address, and telephone number of the present owner of the property:** The owners of the property are:

William F. Raines III and Rehnea Raines
9103 Brightleaf Place
Charlotte, NC 28269
Telephone: (704) 597-5044
Tax Parcel Number: 017-113-06
3. **Representative photographs of the property:** This report includes photographs of the property
4. **A map depicting the location of the property:** This report contains maps which depict the location of the property.





5. **Current Deed Book Reference to the property:** The most recent deed to this property is listed in Mecklenburg County Deed Book 20367 at page 212. The Tax Parcel Number of the property is 017-113-06.
6. **A brief historical sketch of the property:** This report contains a brief historical sketch of the property prepared by Brandon Lunsford.
7. **A brief architectural description of the property:** This report contains a brief historical sketch of the property prepared by Stewart Gray
8. **Documentation of how and in what ways the property meets criteria for designation set forth in N.C.G.S. 160A-400.5:**
 - a. **Special significance in terms of its history, architecture, and/or cultural importance:** The Commission judges that the property known as the William Joseph and Ellen Hunter Ranson House does possess special significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations:

- 1) The Ranson House was constructed in 1913 during a period of intense growth and development in the town of Huntersville
- 2) The Ranson House was built by William.Joseph Ranson and Ellen Hunter Ranson, descendents of two of the most important and influential local farming families that were responsible for the creation and development of the town of Huntersville. The Ranson family was also integral to the emergence of organized religion in Huntersville with the first ARP church.
- 3) The Ransons were important local farmers and operated a cotton gin and a cow and dairy farm in the Huntersville community.
- 4) The Ranson House has served as the Ranson family home from 1913 to its recent sale in 2006, and has been the social center of this important Huntersville family, as well as a gathering place for local groups, citizens and visitors to the town.
- 5) The Ranson House remains an excellent example of an extant family farm house in a largely rural farming community that still exists during a period of recent and intense suburban and corporate growth in Huntersville.
- 6) The Ranson House retains many original material such as much of the early woodwork including mantels, flooring, porch columns, and the upstairs ceilings as well as the original pressed metal ceilings on the downstairs floor.
- 7) The location of the Ranson House on a historic rail corridor in Huntersville helps document the early economic growth of the town, of which the Ranson and Hunter families were an important part.
- 8) The Ranson House is among the largest and most fully realized examples of early-20th century Colonial Revival Style domestic architecture in Huntersville and in all of northern Mecklenburg County

b. Integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and/or association:

The Commission judges that the architectural description by Gray demonstrates that the Ranson House meets these criteria.

9. **Ad Valorem Tax Appraisal:** The Commission is aware that designation would allow the owner to apply for an automatic deferral of 50% of the Ad Valorem taxes on all or any portion of the property which becomes a designated "historic landmark." The house is currently undergoing extensive renovation that will bring it closer to its original state. The current appraised value of the house and the 1.964 acres of land on which it sits is

Date of Preparation of this Report: 20 March 2007

Prepared by: Stewart Gray

History of the William Joseph and Ellen Hunter Ranson House:



The historic significance of the William Joseph and Ellen Hunter Ranson House is best understood within the broader context of the emergence of Mecklenburg County as a major textile manufacturing center in the second half of the nineteenth century and the roles the owners of the house played in that process, especially as it manifested itself in the Town of Huntersville.

The Town of Huntersville.

In the 1850's and 1860's Charlotte nearly doubled in size as it became the junction of four rail lines that radiated out across Mecklenburg County. Remaining relatively unscathed after the upheaval of the Civil War and Reconstruction, Charlotte thrived as the center of the Piedmont textile belt and as a prominent example of the industrialism of the New South. In a single decade as a railroad town, Charlotte grew as much as it had in its entire first century; cotton sales increased from approximately 3,000 bales in 1855 to around 12,000 bales in 1860.^[1] By the 1880's, new and rebuilt rail lines had not only stimulated Charlotte's expansion but had spawned a network of smaller shipping and trading posts along their routes that blossomed into centers of local trade with bustling main streets and industrial sectors. These small towns operated as links between the burgeoning textile industry and Northern markets by allowing merchants to bypass Southern port cities and market their crops directly to the North in return for goods shipped by rail.^[2] Huntersville and other small towns like Cornelius,

Davidson, Pineville, and Matthews emerged as unique blends of rural and urban sensibilities; in the late 19th century they grew rapidly as local merchants in the town operated cotton gins and other businesses and helped lay the groundwork for schools and churches^[3]. Huntersville developed as a cotton mill and farm support community beside the Atlantic, Tennessee, and Ohio (now Norfolk Southern) railroad line that ran from Charlotte to Statesville. Dr. Charles Fox headed the campaign to establish the A.T. & O. as Charlotte's fourth railroad line; by 1870 tracks re-laid over the line had reached what would become Huntersville, which was incorporated in 1873.^[4] Textile production grew as the population in the town increased; the Anchor Mills complex opened in 1898 and by 1915 employed 176 people who operated 10,700 spindles and 400 looms.^[5]

The Hunter and Ranson Families.

The Hunters and the Ransons were two of the first families to settle in the community that would become Huntersville. The town was initially called "Craighead" after Revolutionary War patriot and preacher Alexander Craighead, but was renamed Huntersville in 1873. The first store and the first residence along the railroad were built in 1870 by Joseph Nicholas Hunter, who was also the first local postmaster. There is some debate about whether the town was named for Joseph Nicholas Hunter or his brother Robert Boston Hunter; but the Hunters provided the growing community with its namesake and became a prominent farming and mercantile family in the town.^[6]

Huntersville could justifiably have been named "Ransonville" since the Ranson family was also extremely important to the early history of the town. They arrived later than the Hunters, from South Carolina around the time of the Civil War.^[7] The Reverend Alexander Ranson was originally from Anderson S.C. and a graduate of Erskine College and the Associate Reformed Presbyterian (ARP) Theological Seminary; in 1856 he was called to the joint pastorates of Gilead and Prosperity ARP Churches and arrived in "Craighead." Beginning a long association between the Ransons and the Hunters, the Reverend Ranson purchased from Robert Boston Hunter approximately 160 acres of land approximately halfway between the two churches. He started holding services outdoors with a pulpit made of oak saplings in a neighboring farmyard; and on March 25, 1875, a formal congregation of around 40 was established as the ARP Church of Huntersville.^[8]

Around 1872, the Reverend Ranson's nephew William Joseph Ranson (born November 17, 1859) came to live with his older brother in Huntersville and helped operate the family cotton gin; he eventually purchased half an interest in the Ranson Brothers Gin Company.^[9] When his brother retired from the business for health reasons William Joseph was given the other half and soon operated Huntersville's principal cotton gin.^[10]

The William Joseph and Ellen Hunter Ranson House

The William Joseph and Ellen Hunter Ranson House was built in 1913 and remained the family home and social center of the Ranson family for 83 years until it was sold in 2006. On November 27, 1890, William Joseph Ranson married Ellen Viola Hunter (the granddaughter of Robert Boston Hunter)^[11] in a union of two of the most prominent families in Huntersville. By the beginning of the 20th century the Hunters and the Ransons were involved in a variety of local businesses; the Hunters owned a store and other concerns near the railroad track, and the Ransons had a mill and several stores of their own^[12]. William Joseph and Ellen had nine children together and in 1913 settled off of Watkins Street one block away from the railroad tracks. In Huntersville, Old Statesville Road was the main business street and ran roughly parallel to the railroad tracks; the Ransons built their house at the intersection of Old Statesville and what is now Mt. Holly/Huntersville road at an important crossing at the southern end of town.

The Ranson family employed Cornelius contractor Will Potts to build them a large farmhouse; in small towns like Huntersville the earliest Colonial Revival houses such as this arose as grand two story forms. The William Joseph and Ellen Hunter Ranson House is a particularly significant example of this style for an outlying town such as Huntersville; it emerged as a massive box frame with a wraparound veranda that expressed the Colonial Revival style in its porch pediments and classical columns.^[13] William Joseph and some relatives traveled to Georgia to select durable, kiln-dried Georgia “heart pine” for the construction. The roof was covered in cypress shingles soaked in creosote, and the interior was paneled with dark mahogany woodwork. For the downstairs Will Potts designed and installed ornate pressed tin ceilings.^[14] The house was also the first house in Huntersville with indoor plumbing, electricity, and a telephone.^[15]

The house was once the centerpiece of a 3200 acre dairy farm, and a small milk house still remains behind the house.^[16] Kate Ranson Cornue (daughter of William Joseph and Ellen Hunter Ranson) recalled that there was once a large green barn for livestock behind the house with an additional structure where the cows were fed and milked.^[17] The farm was also home to William Joseph Ranson’s cotton ginning business which he continued to run until the 1920s.^[18] Over the years the Ranson family sold off most of the land; after the house left the hands of the family in 2006 only about 21 acres remained.^[19]

Throughout its 83 years as the Ranson family home, the William Joseph and Ellen Hunter Ranson House served as an important social landmark of the town as well as the homeplace of the Ranson family. Ellen Hunter Ranson relished her role as a hostess and often invited overnight and weekend guests for long periods; there was a traditional New Years Party at the house beginning in 1914.^[20] Local ARP church functions would often be held at the house; visitors to town as well as visiting athletic teams would often spend nights there following a road game against Huntersville High School. In the 1970’s the downstairs level of the house was converted into apartments that were rented out by the Ransons.^[21]

By the late 1990's, all of the nine children of William Joseph and Ellen had died; the house passed to Frederick and Virginia Cornue, the grandchildren of William Joseph and Ellen Hunter Ranson.^[22] In 2006, William F. Raines III and his wife Rehnea Raines bought the 4,400 square foot house and 2.7 acres for \$476,000 at a sealed bid auction.^[23] On April 28th, 2006, the Cornues deeded the Raineses the property in three separate tracts of land.^[24] The Raineses are renovating the house so that it will resemble its initial state of construction; they are exposing the original woodwork and the pressed tin ceilings that were covered up after the downstairs level was converted into apartments.^[25] On May 1, 2006, they applied to the town of Huntersville to have the house rezoned as "neighborhood center,"^[26] they plan to use the house as a civic/community facility for holding weddings and special events as well as a residence.^[27]

The William Joseph and Ellen Hunter Ranson House remains an important symbol of Huntersville's agrarian past and of two important families that shaped the early economic, social, and religious life of the community. It is also an excellent example of a large family farmhouse that was a social gathering place for friends, family, and visitors to the town. In a time of heavy corporate and residential growth in Huntersville, it is important to recognize the significance of this link to the town's rural past as it grew up along the path of the railroad.

^[1] Hanchett, Tom, Sorting out the New South City: Race, Class, and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1875-1975. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998, p.22.

^[2] Mattson, Richard L, Historic Landscapes of Mecklenburg County: The Small Towns, July 1991, p. 4.

^[3] Ibid, p. 1-2.

^[4] Morrill, Dan, Historic Charlotte: An Illustrated History of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. San Antonio: Historical Publications Network, 2001, p.31.

^[5] Mattson, p. 50.

^[6] "A Huntersville Album" Mecklenburg Gazette, December 13, 1979, p. 2-3. Robert Boston Hunter was in Craighead by 1848 or earlier, and his first son Andrew Jones Hunter was born in 1845. Andrew married Harriet Sample on Oct. 25, 1866; and their first child, a daughter named Ellen Viola Hunter, was born on December 6, 1867.

^[7] Mitchell, Tucker, "A House Full of History," Huntersville Herald, April 29, 2005, p. 9.

^[8] Ranson Cornue, Kate, "I Remember When," Undated handwritten manuscript. The first congregation of the Huntersville ARP Church included Robert Boston Hunter and his son Andrew Jones Hunter. In 1878 the church's new minister William W. Orr began building

Huntersville's reputation as an impressive center by founding Huntersville High School. The young Ellen Viola Hunter was one of the first twelve students of the school, and graduated with the first class in 1885.

[9] Ranson Cornue, Kate, "I Remember When," Undated handwritten manuscript. The Reverend Ranson had brought the children of his late brother Robert Ranson from South Carolina to live with him in Huntersville after he had been killed in the battle of Manassas. The eldest son John J. Ranson married Rose Elizabeth Hunter, daughter of Robert Boston Hunter.

[10] Mattson, p. 32.

[11] Ranson Family Genealogy, created by the family.

[12] Ranson Cornue, Kate, "I Remember When," Undated handwritten manuscript.

[13] Mattson,, p. 32.

[14] Historic Home Will Get Face Lift," Charlotte Observer, May 28, 2006.

[15] Mitchell, p. 11.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ranson Cornue, Kate, "I Remember When," Undated handwritten manuscript. Kate Ranson Cornue used to write an article for the now-defunct Mecklenburg Gazette discussing her memories of her family and the early history of Huntersville, and many of her undated handwritten manuscripts for these articles were given to the archives of the Carolina Room when the house was sold in 2006.

[18] Ranson Cornue, Kate, "I Remember When," Undated handwritten manuscript.

[19] Mecklenburg County Deed Book 20367, p.212, 28 April, 2006.

[20] Ranson Cornue, Kate, "I Remember When," Undated handwritten manuscript. Kate Ranson Cornue remembers the first party in 1914-1915 when her brother Lucius and his friends from UNC-Chapel Hill packed about 100 people singing Auld Lang Syne and holding hands across the 65 feet of the front porch.

[21] Mitchell, p. 9.

[22] Mitchell, p. 8. William Joseph Ranson deeded the house to his sons Robert Lacy Ranson and Donald H. Ranson on July 15, 1941, soon after Ellen Hunter Ranson died (Mecklenburg County Deed Book 1109, p.17, 5 July, 1941). On August 19th, 1970, Donald H. Ranson and his wife Minnie Ranson (along with the executors of the estate of Robert Lacy Ranson) deeded the property to Kate Ranson Cornue (Mecklenburg County Deed Book 3235, p. 427, 19 August 1970). On December 9, 1996, a quitclaim deed was signed by Rebecca Nell Ranson granting a

portion of the property to Kate's two children Charles Frederick Cornue Jr. and Virginia Cornue (Mecklenburg County Deed Book 09870, p.925, 9 December, 1996) Other portions of the property still held by Minnie Ranson were conveyed to the Cornue siblings on May 6, 1999. (Mecklenburg County Deed Book 10457, p.428, 6 May, 1999).

^[23] "Historic Home Will Get Face Lift," Charlotte Observer, May 28, 2006.

^[24] Mecklenburg County Deed Book 20367, p.212, 28 April, 2006.

^[25] "Historic Home Will Get Face Lift," Charlotte Observer, May 28, 2006.

^[26] Town of Huntersville Zoning Application Form, 1 May, 2006.

^[27] Interview with William F. Raines III and Rehnea Raines, 26 January, 2007.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION



The 1913 Ranson House is a large, two-story frame, Colonial Revival Style house that faces east and sits on a relatively level lot at the corner of Old Statesville and Huntersville-Mt. Holly Roads in the Town of Huntersville. The house is setback approximately 80 feet from Old Statesville Road, with mature oak trees located in front and to the south of the house. Much of the 2.3 acre lot to the rear of the house is an open grassy yard. The neighboring houses along Old

Statesville Road include both one and two story early 20th-century houses, but none is as large as the Ranson House.

The Ranson house is supported by a brick foundation composed of brick piers and curtain walls that totally underpin the entire house and the front porch. Slots in a cross pattern allow for ventilation of the crawlspace. The brickwork of the foundation is pargeted. Three sets of brick steps with pargeted brick cheek walls lead to the porch. The front steps appear to be original. The steps on the north side of the porch were recently laid between the existing cheek walls. Wide steps that access the southern side of the wrap-around porch are of new construction. Narrow pre-cast concrete steps that date from the second half of the 20th century lead to the rear of the wrap-around porch on the southern side of the house. Brick and large-aggregate concrete steps lead to a now enclosed rear porch.



The facade of the Ranson house is symmetrical. A prominent hipped-roof porch supported by simple classical columns wraps the facade. The porch floor is tongue-and-groove boards. Centered on the porch is a small gable that projects slightly from the principal section of the porch. The gable channels water from the roof and the porch away from the front steps that lead to the entrance but is too shallow to shelter the front steps. Typical for the Colonial Revival Style, the pediment accentuates the front entrance. The porch is covered with green painted metal roof panels.

The section of the porch that spans the width of the facade is supported by grouped classical columns. The columns are simple. They taper and feature two bands of moulded trim below a simple square capital. The base is decorated with a single moulded band. The columns rest on

raised square bases. These bases have been replaced and raised slightly to account for wood rot at the bottoms of the columns. It appears that only one of the original columns has been replaced with a new column of similar dimensions. The centered gable/pediment is supported ranked columns. The corners of the front section of the porch are supported by sets of three columns.

The porch is stepped back slightly as it extends to either side past the facade. The columns support boxed beams that are formed with stepped boards and topped with a moulded crown. The columns also support handrails that feature moulded beveled top-rail and plain square pickets. The ceiling of the porch is composed of beaded boards.





Front Door



Typical Window

The facade of the Ranson House is three bays wide. The front door is located in the center bay. The wide front door is constructed of pine and features a single large plate-glass light, a small moulded sill below the light, and a single flat panel held in place with moulded trim. The door is surrounded by sidelights and transom windows. The side lights feature the same panel, moulding, and decorative sill design as the door. The glass in the sidelights and the glass in the door is held in with narrow beaded wooden stops. Three transom windows top the door and sidelights. The transom windows are putty-glazed. The door trim is topped with a moulded cap. The front doorway of the Ranson House reflects the architecture of the house as a whole. The doorway is large with very refined millwork, but the decorative elements are restrained. This type of doorway was also typical of the Colonial Revival Style architecture of the period.



To either side of the front entrance the two remaining bays contain paired twelve-over-one double-hung windows. The window sills are stepped and are relatively low-pitched. The window trim is topped with a beveled cap supported with moulded trim. The trim and sill design is the same for all of the original windows on the house. The facade features plain lap siding and plain corner boards.

The facade's second-story fenestration is aligned with the bays below. The center bay contains a single twelve-over-one window, and the two remaining bays each contains paired twelve-over-one windows. The windows on the second story are protected with metal frame storm windows and are shorter than those found on the first story. Above the second-story windows is a wide freeze board. The freeze is topped with moulded trim nailed to the freeze and the soffit. The soffit is composed of two wide boards. The front of the house features two hipped-roofed dormers. The dormers each contain a single nine-light sash. The dormer walls are covered with wood shingles, and the dormers feature smaller-scaled soffits and freeze boards like those found on the rest of the house.

The strict symmetry of the facade is reflected in the twin chimneys that pierce the hipped roof. The chimneys exhibit a distinctive line where the color of the mortar changes. Now plain, historic photos show that the tops of the chimney's were once decorated with corbelled bands. Like the porch roof, the principal roof is covered with green painted metal roof panels. The design of the Ranson House's roof is unusual. The center section of the large hipped roof is flat. Currently a rubber membrane seals the flat section of the roof. A flat center

section allowed for the remaining roof sections to be steeper. This may have been done to increase attic space or to maintain a desired roof profile.



Ranson House - South Elevation



North Elevation - Projecting
Wing

The north and south side elevations feature cross-hipped wings that expand the width of the house by one bay on each side. These narrow wings add a generous amount of interior space without enlarging the appearance of the facade. The architect (unknown) may have been purposefully limiting the width of the facade to highlight the pedimented entrance or may have felt that the proportions of the three-bay-wide facade fit better with the Colonial Revival Style. The front elevations of these wings are narrow, with each wing containing a door that opens onto the wrap-around front porch. The doors feature one large single light and two horizontal panels. Brass knobs and lock plates appear to be original. On the second story the bays contain a single twelve-over-one window. The side elevation of the wing on the southern side of the house contains a single window opening on each story. On the northern side of the house the projecting wing contains two windows on each story.



The symmetry and consistency of the fenestration found on the front of the house is not found on the rear of the house. The rear wall of the principal section of the house is pierced with a variety of double-hung windows. The single bay to the north of the rear ell features a tall twelve-over-one window on the first story, and a shorter twelve-over-one window on the second floor. To the south of the ell, the rear wall of the principal section of the house is two bays wide. The outer bay contains twelve-over-one windows on both stories. The interior bay contains narrower nine-over-one windows on both stories. Centered on the rear elevation, and set above the porch roof of the rear ell, is a twelve-over-one window that is topped with a four light transom. This large window unit provides light for a stairwell. A six-light casement is located to the north of the large center window. A dormer like those found on the front of the house is centered on the rear section of the hipped roof.



The rear of the Ranson House features a one-story, gabled ell set off-center and closer to the north side elevation of the principal section of the house. The rear ell is largely obscured by now-enclosed porches on the rear (west) and south elevations. It appears that the ell's side porch was an original feature of the house. It is covered with a very low-pitched roof and is currently enclosed with two banks of three modern wooden nine-over-one windows that replaced earlier storm-type windows. The windows sit on a half wall covered with simple lap siding. The tops of the window frames meet the bottom of the original boxed-in porch beam. Centered between the banks of windows is a door opening topped with a modern single-light transom. It appears that the rear porch was added later. The rear porch features a more steeply pitched roof that begins under the eave of the side porch. The rear porch is built on a stuccoed foundation and features a sloping floor. The porch features exposed rough-sawn rafters and exposed roof sheathing. The porch was previously enclosed with siding and storm windows. Currently the porch is being sheathed with plywood and will feature new siding and replacement windows.

The exposed north elevation of the rear ell features the same soffit and freeze design as found on the rest of the house, except that the soffit is narrower. The north elevation of the ell is pierced by two nine-over-one windows. The windows are shorter than those found on the rest of the first story.

INTERIOR

The most significant interior feature of the Ranson House is the extensive use of pressed-metal ceilings in the first story. While "tin" ceilings were commonly installed in commercial buildings

in Mecklenburg County from the last decade of the 19th century until the 1930's, the use of metal ceilings in houses in the county appears to have been quite rare. Several early 20th century commercial buildings such as the Funderburk Building in Matthews, the Hand Pharmacy in Charlotte, and the Bank of Huntersville all originally featured pressed-metal ceilings. The Ziem House (1910) in Elizabeth is the only other house in Mecklenburg County with an original pressed-metal ceiling that has been identified by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission. In addition to pressed-metal panels that are decorated with coffers and decorative geometric designs, pressed metal was also used in the Ranson House for wide textured ceiling borders and egg and dart crown trim.



Bedroom Ceiling Detail



Crown Detail



Hallway Ceiling



Metal covering stair soffit

While the setback wings of the Ranson House help to minimize the massive appearance of the house, in the interior the scale and number of rooms are appropriate for a very large house. The house features a formal wide front center hallway that opens into a front parlor and a rear hallway through sets of double five-panel doors. The front hallway features tall beaded-board wainscoting and a tall baseboard. The hall has retained its original metal ceiling. The floors throughout most of the house are narrow strip pine flooring. The walls in most of the house are covered with original plaster over wooden lath.

The front parlor features a cold-burning fireplace with a glazed tile surround and a fine mahogany mantle. The mantelpiece features tall classical columns, a beveled mirror, and a thick curved shelf. The original iron frame and firebox cover have survived. The parlor also contains recessed shelves enclosed by a pair of twelve-light glass doors. The interior of the house has generally retained a high degree of integrity. However, a recent fire damaged a large portion of the ceiling in the parlor. The original metal ceiling in the parlor was removed and replaced with a new reproduction metal ceiling.



Parlor



Dining
Room

A door in the rear of the parlor leads to a large dining room, the largest room in the house. The dining room features built-in cabinet on either side of a fireplace. The tall mantelpiece is very similar to the one found in the parlor, except that the dining room mantelpiece has been painted and features scroll work trim around the mirror, applied floral decoration, and a more delicate mantle shelf. The room features a beaded-board wainscot. The original pine floor in the dining room has been replaced with a narrow-strip oak floor. The original metal ceiling was replaced with a panel ceiling at some point late in the 20th century, and a reproduction metal ceiling is being installed.

The northern side of the first story of the Ranson House contained the more public rooms, the parlor and the dining room. The southern side of the first story contained two bedrooms and a bathroom. The front bedroom features a darkly stained oak craftsman-style mantelpiece, the only significant craftsman-style element in the house. This mantle contrast markedly to the tall classically inspired mantelpieces found elsewhere in the house. A short hall that features an original built-in corner cabinet leads to the rear hallway. Off of the rear hallway is a second bedroom that features another tall mirrored mantelpiece. The mantelpiece features the same elements found on the mantelpieces in the parlor and dining room, but is somewhat plainer, with shorter columns setting on tall blocks. The bedroom has retained its original metal ceiling and metal egg-and-dart crown.



First-story
bedroom



Second-story
bedroom

The rear hallway gives access to the first-story bedrooms, the downstairs bathroom, the dining room, and the original rear porch. The hallway features wainscoting, original metal ceiling, and metal crown trim. The rear hallway contains the house's only staircase. The turning staircase features a simple handrail and pickets. The balustrade's posts are adorned with finials and pendants. The lower portion of the stairs shelter a small closet. Where the stairs turn back towards the front of the house, the soffit is covered with sheets of embossed metal.



The second story contains an open central hall that connects to four more bedrooms. The level of finish on the second story is not as high as that found on the first story. Each bedroom contains a mantelpiece with small classical columns supporting a narrow shelf. All of the mantelpieces are slightly different and all are shorter than the tall mirrored mantelpieces found on the first story. The ceiling on the second story is composed of beaded boards. The level of integrity on the second story is high, with the original baseboards, simple window trim, and five panel doors still largely in place. Currently the rear bedroom on the northern side of the house is being divided to allow for an additional bathroom to be installed.

The rear ell always contained a kitchen. In contrast to the rest of the house, the interior of the kitchen ell has lost its integrity. The kitchen has been remodeled several times, and the original floor has been removed. A doorway may have been added to the rear wall of the kitchen to access the added rear porch. Surviving original elements in the kitchen include a recently uncovered beaded-board ceiling, and portions of beaded-board walls. A windowless attic room over the kitchen features beaded-board half walls and sloping ceilings.

The gashouse is a small frame building with a hipped, nearly pyramidal, roof. The building originally served to house a carbide gas system that provided gas for lighting the house. The system required the homeowner to add a carbide powder to a sealed tank containing water. The powder combined with water produced a flammable gas that was piped into the house. The roof of the gashouse is covered with asphalt shingles and the building is sided with simple siding. The board-door hangs on strap hinges. It is notable that this simple outbuilding features an enclosed soffit. The hipped-roof design may have been intended to echo the form of the main house. Electrical power came to Huntersville soon after the house was built and the gas system was abandoned. The small building has been moved several times, and once set close to Old Statesville Road where it was used as a produce stand. The building now stands to the southwest of the house.



Gas House



Milk House

The milk house sits close to the southwest corner of the house. The building has been somewhat altered over time and now suffers from a loss of integrity. It appears that the building originally consisted of two brick cribs or rooms separated by a center hall. This structure was never a milking barn. It was the part of Ranson Dairy in which milk was pasteurized and bottled and from which it was delivered around town to customers. The milking barn was in the rear of the property between the huge oak tree in the back yard and the hay barn which sat roughly in the middle of the rear lot--there is a slight rise in that lot which marks the site to the silo attached to the hay barn. They were milked twice a day in that small barn not in the Milk House.

Each of the three sections of the Milk House are original. The shed room section was always a dirt floored storage area for milking gear and other farm tools. The center section was where the milk was pasteurized and cooled and the front porch section was where the milk bottles were sterilized and from which the milk was bottled and loaded for delivery. The concrete walls were built of poured forms and strengthened with any metal junk lying around: broken hoe heads, plow shares, barbed wire and the like. (This information comes from Dr. Virginia Cornue, granddaughter of William Joseph and Ellen Hunter Ranson).

Both ends of the hall have been filled with poured-in-place concrete walls. The infill wall on the south end contains a door and two double-hung windows. Fenestration in the original sections of the building includes square un-glazed window opening with angled sills and timber jams and headers that act to support the brickwork above them. The south elevation features one original board-door, as well as more modern replacement doors and windows. The building is roofed with metal 5-V panels.









