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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC Vawter Hall &amp; Old President's House (preferred)

AND/OR COMMON  
Vawter Hall, Office Annex

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER  
College Avenue, Virginia State University

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN  
Ettrick

VICINITY OF Third (David E. Satterfield)

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE  
VirginiaCODE  
51COUNTY  
ChesterfieldCODE  
041

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input 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
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Board of Trustees, c/o Thomas Law, President

STREET & NUMBER  
Virginia State UniversityCITY, TOWN  
Petersburg

VICINITY OF

STATE  
Virginia

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Chesterfield County Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN  
Chesterfield Court HouseSTATE  
Virginia

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission SurveyHas this property been  
determined eligible? Yes  NoDATE  
1979 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 221 Governor StreetCITY, TOWN  
RichmondSTATE  
Virginia 23219

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<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		

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Vawter Hall and the Old President's House are located on College Avenue on the campus of Virginia State University at Ettrick in Chesterfield County. Built of brick in a modified Queen Anne style, Vawter Hall was erected in 1908 and the Old President's House in 1913. At one time the buildings formed the eastern boundary of the college quadrangle.

Vawter Hall, the oldest structure on campus, is a three-story, gable-roof building executed in seven-course American-bond brick. The H-plan edifice was modified by the addition of a one-bay, two-story projection on the east elevation. The building retains its original first-story porches on the north, east and west elevations, which consist of square Doric columns that support a shed-roof covering. The porches sit on square brick piers and are approached by wooden steps with simply executed wooden railings. A wooden lattice is found between the basement piers on the north elevation. The south porch has lost its shed roof and columns; brick piers now support the railings.

The south and west entrances consist of nine-light glass double doors, topped by a multi-light transom and sidelights set within a simply executed architrave, capped by a stone lintel. The north entrance is distinguished by twin entrances similar in execution to the south and west but lacking sidelights. The east entrance has a segmental arched doorway with a nine-light glass door. Bracketed cast-iron wall lamps flank the north and south entrances.

Fenestration consists of segmental arched openings with 6/6 hung-sash windows. Round windows with louvres are found in the attic story. Parapet gable dormer windows with 6/6 hung sash project from the roof. Parapet gables together with a corbeled brick cornice distinguish the building's roof. Brick corbeled cap chimneys further enhance the roof line.

The building contains a central hall that runs north and south bisected by a lateral hall. The main stair in the south hall, has an open well, large square newel, a molded handrail and turned balusters, two to a tread. The first and second floors are divided into offices. The basement contains a small auditorium and additional office and storage space. The interior walls are plastered with later partitions comprised of plaster board and wood. The original wood flooring has been covered with linoleum tile. The doors and windows are framed by simply executed wooden architraves.

The Old President's House is a 2½-story structure executed in 5-course American-bond brick with wood trim. The building was modified in the later part of the present century by the enclosing of the porch at the southwest corner. At an earlier date the residence was extended one bay to the east. The porch was originally an Eastlake type with a spindle frieze, but now it consists of three sets of paired Doric columns on brick piers supporting a shed roof. A Doric cornice runs the perimeter of the porch. Sheltered by the porch is a transom-light doorway within a simply executed architrave. The eastern porch has square Doric columns and pilasters supporting a flat roof. Cement steps are flanked by brick piers and plain wood railings. The porch shelters a segmental arched doorway that retains its original paneled door.

Fenestration consists of segmental openings that contain 2/2 hung-sash windows. Smaller 3/3 hung-sash windows are found on the attic story. The structure is covered by a hip roof

# 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 type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" 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 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 1908 Vawter; 1907 President's House BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE Chartered by the General Assembly in 1882 as the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute, Virginia State University is the oldest state-supported college for blacks in the United States. Vawter Hall (1908) and the Old President's House (1907), the school's oldest institutional buildings, are situated on the southern boundary of the present 210-acre campus in Ettrick, Chesterfield County. Together with the now-demolished Johnston Hall and the old Virginia Hall, the two somewhat austere brick structures formed the academic and administrative heart of the college during the early 20th century and are now the focus of the school's historical associations.

The school's history begins in 1880 when the Readjuster Party, led by former Confederate General William Mahone, came to power overthrowing the long-entrenched Democratic Party. Black votes were mainly responsible for this political upheaval, responding to Readjuster promises to keep open their schools, pay their teachers, and establish a college for them. One of Mahone's chief lieutenants was Alfred W. Harris, an attorney who resided in Dinwiddie County and maintained a law office in Petersburg. Representing the county, Harris was one of the 13 blacks serving in the Virginia House of Delegates in 1882. Delegate Harris introduced and pushed to passage the bill fulfilling the Readjusters' pledge to establish a school for blacks.

The law incorporating Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute was enacted on March 6, 1882 and provided for a normal program (teacher-training) of up to three years, as well as a four-year college program in the classics, higher mathematics and other humanities. The act specified that the institution would be governed by a board of seven visitors, six of whom were to be black. In mid-February 1883, the board purchased for \$13,500 the 33-acre "Fleets Farm," including its 12-room, two-story brick residence. Classes were held here until the construction of the Main Building, later called Virginia Hall, in 1888.

When the Readjusters fell from power, hostility to black education mounted. Whites replaced blacks on the board; the college appropriation was cut and the faculty reduced; and the first president, John M. Langston resigned. The school's second president, James Hugh Johnston, Sr. assumed the office on January 1, 1888. He headed the institution for 26 years and managed to isolate the college from the hazardous political climate.

Subscribing to the accommodationist policies of Booker T. Washington, President of Tuskegee Institute, President Johnston tried to show politicians that the school was rendering valuable service to the total community. Increasingly, he became a disciple of the vocational training offered at Hampton Institute and Tuskegee. Courses in carpentry, cooking, sewing, and shoe-making were added to the curriculum during the 1890s.

Despite political and social setbacks, President Johnston kept the school in operation. In 1907 a course in vocational agriculture was organized. This was followed in 1908 by the restoration of an annual state appropriation of \$20,000, the sum granted for operations in the

(See continuation sheet #1)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Vawter Hall & Old President's House, Chesterfield County, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

#1

ITEM NUMBER 7, 8 PAGE 1, 1

### 7. DESCRIPTION

with a cross gable. A bracketed cornice embellishes the eaves. Brick chimneys with corbeled brick caps break the roof line. The roof is covered with standing-seam sheet metal.

The former residence-turned-"office annex" has a central hall plan. The main open-well stair is found on the western end; a closed-well stair is on the eastern end. The main stair has a scrolled and turned newel, molded hand rail, and turned balusters, two to a tread. The walls are plastered, and the floors are wood. Symmetrical architraves with molded corner blocks surround the major door and window openings. Fluted Ionic columns flank the doorway between the hall and parlor. Double glass doors are contained within a symmetrical architrave. The former parlor retains its original brick mantel. Portions of the interior have been partitioned for faculty offices. The house ceased to be a residence in the 1930s.

The old campus to the west of the two structures remains open and is regarded as the heart of the university campus.

RCC

### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

The nominated property on College Avenue is bounded on three sides by a road and to the west by a straight line that extends through the old campus field. The nominated acreage includes Vawter Hall and the Old President's House and the land that immediately surrounds them. About an acre of land exists between the two buildings.

RCC

### 8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

act of 1882. In the same year Vawter Hall was built for administration, bookstore, cafeteria, and theatre activities. This followed the completion of the President's residence, authorized by the Board of Trustees in 1906.

President Johnston died in April 1914 and was succeeded by James Manuel Gandy. Gandy directed curricular changes and physical expansion. In 1918 the school set up Federally funded vocational agricultural courses based on the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917. In 1920 the legislature made the institution the land grant college for blacks in Virginia, moving that program from Hampton Institute, a private school. In 1923, after a lapse of two decades, the Board of Visitors restored a four-year college department. In 1930 Federally financed extension work under the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 was brought to the college, renamed the Virginia State College for Negroes. The name was changed again in 1946 to Virginia State College. In 1979 the school became Virginia State University.

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

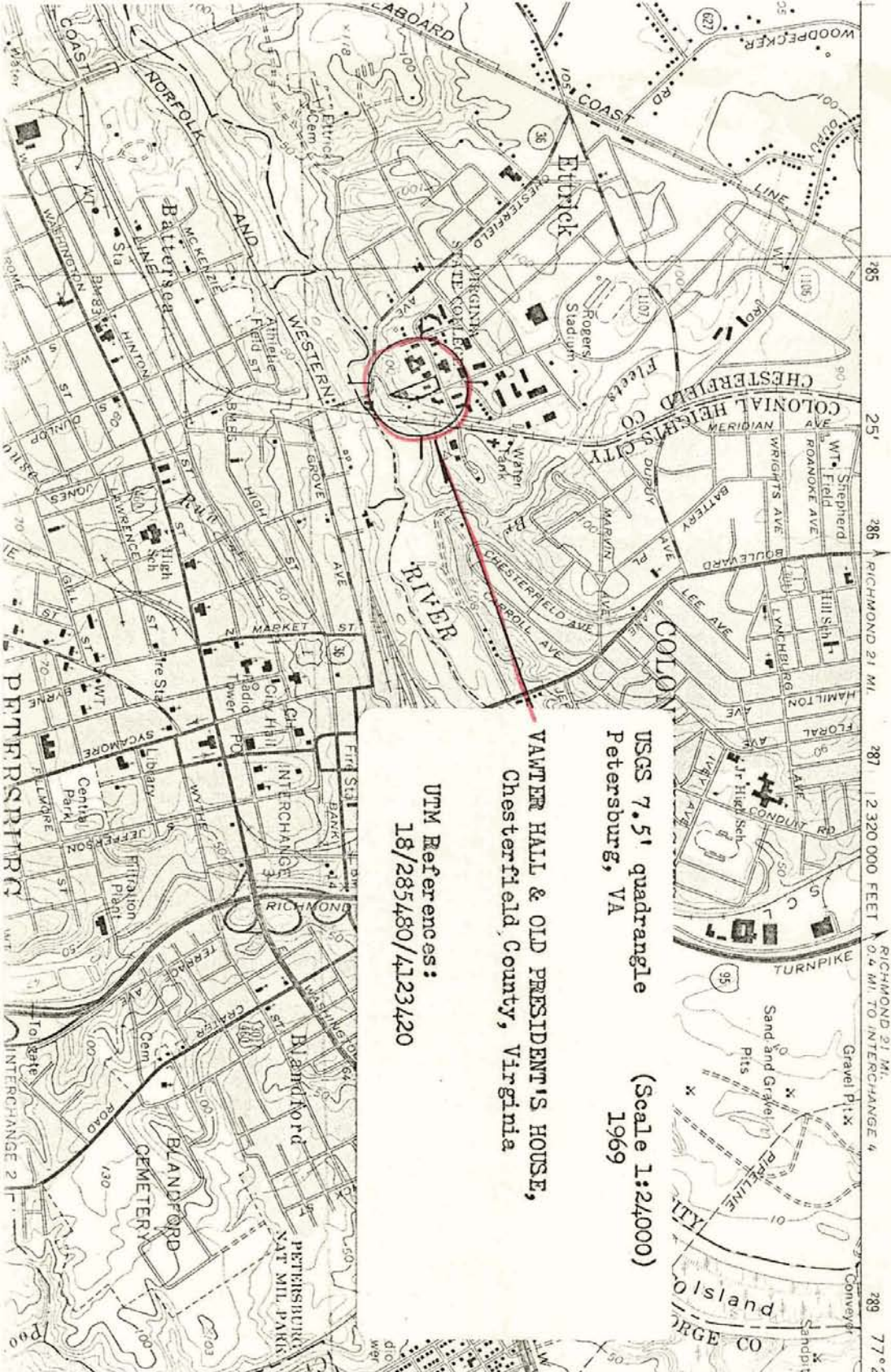
Vawter Hall & Old President's House, Chesterfield County, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET #2 ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

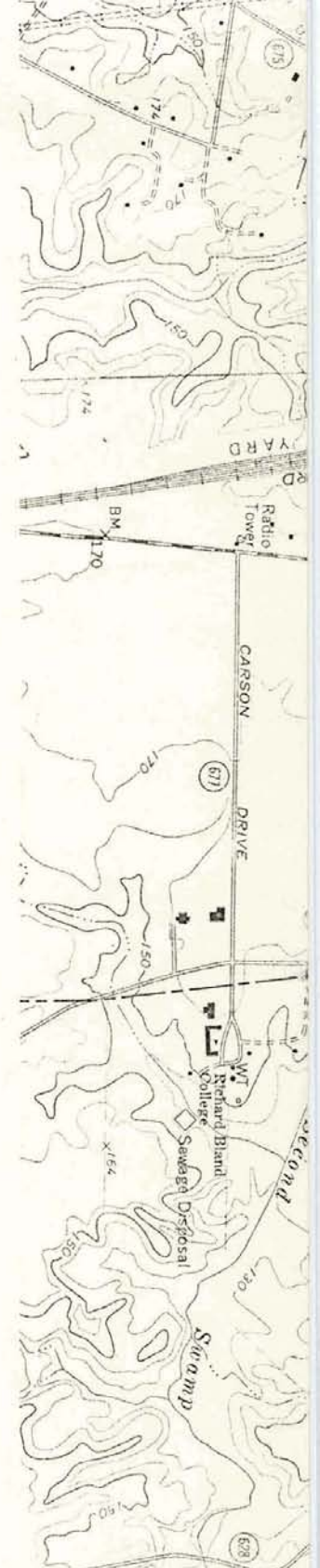
Under its varied names and curricula the institution has graduated many illustrious alumni, including William H. Lewis, the first black to be an All-American in football and to hold a sub-Cabinet post; Camilla Williams, the first to star in a major opera company; Hugh Smythe, one of the first black American ambassadors; Alfred Cade, one of the first black generals; and many others who have become leaders in education, sports, and business.

MTP/RCC



VAWTER HALL & OLD PRESIDENT'S HOUSE,  
 Chesterfield County, Virginia  
 USGS 7.5' quadrangle  
 Petersburg, VA  
 (Scale 1:24,000)  
 1969  
 UTM References:  
 18/285480/4123420

PETERSBURG QUADRANGLE  
 VIRGINIA  
 7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)  
 NW/4 PETERSBURG 15' QUADRANGLE  
 5558 IV SE  
 (HOPEWELL)



4122 4123 330 000 FEET 4125 4115  
 HOPEWELL 7 MI.  
 RICHMOND 21 MI.  
 RICHMOND 21 MI.  
 RICHMOND 21 MI. TO INTERCHANGE 4  
 0.4 MI. TO INTERCHANGE 4  
 77° 22' 30"  
 37° 15'

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Richmond, Virginia.. Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Archives.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3 acres      Quadrangle name: Petersburg, Va.  
UTM REFERENCES      Quadrangle Scale: 1:24000

A	1,8	2,8,5	4,8,0	4,1	2,3	4,2,0	B					
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING		
C							D					

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION    Beginning at a point 1100' N of Appomattox River, 3700' SE of intersection of State Routes 36 and 1107, thence extending 250' ENE along S side of Hayden Street to intersection with College Avenue; thence extending approximately 700' S along W side of said avenue; thence extending N 650' to point of origin.

### 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 Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff	DATE February 1980
ORGANIZATION Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission	TELEPHONE (804) 786-3144
STREET & NUMBER 221 Governor Street	STATE Virginia 23219
CITY OR TOWN Richmond	

# 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 Tucker Hill, Executive Director  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE FEB 19 1980

### FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER