

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

LISTED ON:
VLR
06/18/2009
NRHP
05/28/2013

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Lexington

Other names/site number: Moreen; DHR #029-5612; 44FX0736

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: Mason Neck State Park/ 7301 High Point Road

City or town: Lorton State: Virginia County: Fairfax

Not For Publication: Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property x meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national x statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___ A ___ B x C x D

Michael A. Sasser Deputy SHPO March 14, 2013
Signature of certifying official/Title: Date
Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: Date

Title : State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 determined eligible for the National Register
 determined not eligible for the National Register
 removed from the National Register
 other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
Public – Local
Public – State
Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
District
Site
Structure
Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC: Secondary Structures

LANDSCAPE: Garden

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LANDSCAPE: Park

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

N/A

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: N/A

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Located on Mason Neck in southeastern Fairfax County, Lexington was the home seat of the estate of George Mason V. It is thought largely to have been built between 1784 and 1787. The layout of the home seat was based on Georgian principles of symmetrical design. The archaeological site includes the no longer extant structures included a dwelling house, a kitchen, an office, a smokehouse, a dairy, an icehouse, and a well. The grounds were arranged with a service area to the north of the dwelling house and an elaborate terraced garden to the south. Although the designers and builders of the site are unknown, it is generally accepted that George Mason IV probably played a significant role in its design and construction. Due to the estate's relatively rapid economic decline after 1818, few if any improvements or modifications were made to the original late eighteenth-century site plan. Hence, the site retains a temporally pristine archaeological image of the home site's initial design.

Narrative Description

Site Description

Lexington is located in southeastern Fairfax County within the southern half of Mason's Neck. It is situated approximately 3.6 miles southeast of Lorton and 4.3 miles east of Woodbridge. Gunston Hall lies about 0.8 mile to the east. The home seat occupies 12.1 acres of plateau and adjoining slopes. The home seat and surrounding terrain are in revegetating mixed deciduous woodland. Much of the plateau is now covered with exotic stilt grass and beefsteak plant. Except

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for the opening of the well, the dwelling house's cellar, and the icehouse pit, the remnants of no other historic structures are evident at ground level. The configurations of the lawn, the three garden terraces, and the ramps which connected them are largely intact south of the dwelling house. Additional evidence of the historic home seat rest below the ground surface as archaeological features.

The presence and condition of landscape features attributable to Lexington's period of initial design implementation and florescence were determined through archeological investigation conducted for the Mason Neck State Park in 2006 by Inashima. A phased feedback protocol was utilized. During the first phase, a grid system oriented about the cellar foundation of the former main dwelling house was established, and a detailed one-foot contour map of the grounds was prepared. During the second phase, two-foot square test units were selectively situated based on the location of the cellar and the likely location of landscape features in relation to it. During the third phase based on the symmetrical central axis design orientation and plan suggested by the initial test units, contiguous blocks of two-foot square test units were placed to confirm the presence and integrity of the landscape elements suggested by such a design. The occurrence of landscape elements (i.e., building foundations, walks, drives, terraces, etc.) at the predicted locations, the presence of intact landscape fabric (i.e., brick foundations, cobble and gravel walks, etc.), and the association of occupational artifacts document the archeological integrity of the Lexington Home Site.

Landscape Design

The major elements of Lexington's landscape design are laid out within a symmetrical pattern about a central north-south axis. The central axis bisects the dwelling house. The central axis is marked to the north of the house by a broad, now buried gravel drive. It is marked to the south by a broad, now buried gravel walk and by a series of three terrace ramps. To the north of the former dwelling house, four outbuildings are arrayed to the east and west in sets of two. The two nearest are the likely "kitchen" and "office." The two farthest are the likely "smokehouse" and "dairy."

The "kitchen" and "office" are connected by a three foot wide east-west cobble walk which extends along their south or front sides. A twelve foot wide east-west gravel walk is offset eight feet from and parallels the south side of the former dwelling house. A twelve foot wide north-south cobble drive leads toward the "kitchen" which lies northwest of the former dwelling house. A brick curb occurs along this drive's east side.

For the most part, the grounds south of the cellar can be classified as a public area of formal presentation while the grounds north of the cellar can be viewed as a private service area. The grounds in front or south of the main house can be divided into six areas or landscape components: the Fore and Southwest Lawns, the three terraces, and the Front Lot. The Fore Grounds, also, can be viewed an area of quiet contemplation, orderliness, and control. They provided a visual passage across which the vast expanse of George Mason V's estate could be viewed and the immense possibilities of the lands and waterways beyond could be imagined.

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The terrain to the south of the former dwelling house has been extensively modified and has been arranged into a lawn and three terraces with elevated borders along their respective east, west, and south sides. During historic times, the pedestrian transition from the Fore Lawn to the First Terrace was accomplished by ramps situated at the southwest corner, center, and southeast corner of the Fore Lawn. At the present time, the southeast ramp is faintly visible. The center ramp has been heavily degraded but is discernible. Its toe extends onto the First Terrace as a slightly elevated pathway. The southwest ramp is relatively intact although somewhat degraded by vegetation and up turned trees. Further, each of the terraces is connected to the preceding landscape component by a central and two flanking ramps. A central ramp connects the third terrace to the terrain to its south. The surface of the lawn measures approximately 190 feet east-west by 110 feet north-south. The surface of the first terrace measures about 190 feet by 76 feet; the surface of the second terrace, about 185 feet by 46.5 feet; the surface of the third terrace, about 180 feet by 75 feet. The elevation drops from the south edge of each area to the next area about 2, 8, 13, and 12 feet, respectively, from north to south. The main landscape elements are believed to have been installed between circa 1784 and 1787. The landscape architect is unknown.

The Rear Grounds, while no less orderly and controlled, were meant for activity and for the daily necessities of the home seat. Here, food was prepared in the kitchen, and meat was preserved in the smokehouse. Perishables were kept in the icehouse. Milk was stored and made into butter and cheese in the dairy. And, the daily affairs of the estate were overseen in the office. The Rear Grounds, also, provided a passage through which visitors from the outer world arrived to enjoy the splendors of the home seat.

To define the grounds and to guide passage through it, a network of paths had been installed. The medial axis of the site was marked by a grand central path which had been placed along a north-south orientation. This path was paved with gravel from deposits found within the estate. It traversed through the Rear Yard and connected to the Entry Road. Visually extending through the center of the dwelling house, it began again on the south side of the house and continued through the Fore Lawn and the three terraces and down onto the Front Lot.

Dwelling House

The location and size of the dwelling house are indicated by the cellar hole, circa 30 feet by 48 feet. Its depth below the ground surface suggests that the cellar was a high basement with its height divided between subsurface and above surface sections. The walls of the foundation were constructed of brick. Brick rubble mounds at either end of the cellar suggest that the house had dual end chimneys. The length of the building was oriented east-west. The locations of the central drive and walk in relation to the cellar suggest that the dwelling house had centrally oriented doorways and either a central hall or passage. The dwelling house is believed to have been constructed between circa 1784 and 1787. Though George Mason IV and George Mason V are believed to have been involved in its design, the architect and builder are unknown.

The Well

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The well is situated north of the northwest corner of the cellar. It is of brick construction. It has an interior diameter of 3.6 feet and a present depth of 50 feet. The well is felt to be contemporaneous with the dwelling house.

Structure 1W, the "Kitchen"

Structure 1 W is located northwest of the cellar. Based on a 1905 photograph, it is known to have been of frame construction with a brick foundation. Its chimney and fireplace were set along its west wall. None of its above ground elements remain today. A cobble walk paralleled the south side of the foundation. Adjoining the walk along its south edge was 6 foot wide area of brick pavement which apparently paralleled the structure's south facade. Structure 1W is felt to be contemporaneous with the dwelling house.

Cobble Drive

Abutting the south edge of the brick pavement in front of Structure 1 W is a 12 foot wide, brick curbed northsouth oriented cobble drive.

East-West Cobble Walk

Connecting the front or south sides of Structures 1 W and 1 E is a 3 foot wide cobble walk.

Central Entry Drive

Aligned towards the center of the cellar and overlying the central north-south design axis of the home seat is a broad, circa 14 foot wide gravel drive. The drive continues northward before angling off to the northeast to join the main entry road. This drive is thought to be contemporaneous with the dwelling house.

Structure 1 E, the "Office"

Structure 1 E is situated to the northeast of the cellar. Its brick foundation is laid in common bond and measures approximately 18.8 feet east-west by 15.5 feet north-south. Abutting and paralleling its south side are a 3 foot wide cobble walk and a 6 foot wide area of brick pavement. Structure 1 E is believed to date to the original construction period, c. 1784-1787.

Structure 2W, the "Smokehouse"

Structure 2W is located north of Structure 1W. Its foundation is laid in common bond and measures approximately 14.75 feet east-west by 14.5 feet north-south. Its southwest corner is abutted by cobble pavement. Structure 2W is felt to be contemporaneous with the dwelling house.

Structure 2E, the "Dairy"

Structure 2E is situated north of Structure 1 E. Its foundation is laid in common bond and measures about 14+/-feet square. It is thought to be contemporaneous with the dwelling house.

Structures 3W and 4W, the "Sheds"

Structures 3W and 4W are frame sheds which were depicted in a 1905 photograph of Lexington.¹ Structure 4W is represented by a cobble-stone base for one of its support posts.

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Icehouse

The icehouse consists of 3 components and 2 associated landscape features. On the plateau's west edge is a large, 20 feet diameter pit. The pit is currently 11.5 feet deep, but originally probably extended to a depth of 26 feet. Beneath the slope to the pit's west lie a circa 9 feet east-west by 6 feet north-south antechamber and a circa 7.5 feet long entryway. At its tallest, the chamber is 8.2 feet high. The present chamber floor lies 20.5 feet below the surface elevation at the mouth of the pit. Both are constructed with arched brick ceilings resting on coarsely cut stone blocks. The chamber no longer connects to the pit. Exiting out from the entryway, a passageway had been cut into the slope. This led out to a broad landing which had been created from the spoils from the icehouse excavation. The icehouse is believed to date to the circa 1784-1787 building period.

Central Walk

A broad, 14 feet wide north-south gravel walk extends south from the center of the south side of the cellar and along the central axis of the site. The walk traverses the lawn and the three terraces, descending down to the terraces across earthen ramps. The central walk measures, at least, 405 feet long from the cellar to the base of the third terrace.

Flanking Walks

Flanking walks which parallel the central walk along the west and east edges of the lawn and terraces are suggested by the locations of the flanking terrace ramps. The flanking walks traversed the lawn and the three terraces. As the flanking ramps did not continue below the third terrace, the flanking walks appear to have terminated at the third terrace's southern edge. The width of the flanking ramps suggests that these walks were 12 feet wide.

East-West Gravel Walk

A 12 feet wide gravel walk is offset from and parallels the south side of the cellar. The east-west gravel walk appears to have connected to the flanking walks on either side of the lawn.

Terraces

The formal garden area is defined by three terraces of varying dimensions, which cascade downward in a north-to-south direction from the edge of the Fore Lawn. Each succeeding stage drops ever more steeply from the preceding one before flowing into the gentle terrain of the lower Coastal Plain at the base of the Third Terrace. The east-west dimensions of the terraces seem to narrow slightly from north to south, 190 feet, 185 feet, and 180 feet, respectively. The north-south dimensions of the first and third terraces are relatively similar at 76 feet and 75 feet, while the second terrace is noticeably smaller at 46.5 feet. The successive drop in elevation increases from 2 feet to 8 feet to 13 feet from the lawn to the first terrace, from the first terrace to the second terrace, and from the second terrace to the third terrace. The elevation drop from the third terrace to the adjoining terrace is 12 feet.

The components of the Terrace System, for the present discussion, can be identified by several attributes. The upper limit of the preceding landscape area can be designated the *brow* or *southern edge*. Similarly, the side edges of the landscape areas can be called the *lateral* or *east* and *west edges*. The sloping terrain between each landscape area can be called the *transitional*

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bank. Likewise, the sloping terrain along the sides of the landscape areas can be termed the *lateral* or *east* and *west banks*. The lower edge of the transitional bank can be designated the *base*. The elongated formal pathways which provide passage down from one area to the next can be termed the *ramps*. The area between the base of the transitional bank and the brow and between the corners of each area can be called the *terrace surface*. The broad artificial ravines along the sides of the Second and Third Terraces can be termed the *lateral* or *east* and *west swales*.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

ARCHAEOLOGY: Historic – Non-Aboriginal

Period of Significance

1784-1818

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Euro-American

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Lexington home seat is a rare example of a well-preserved archaeological site which retains much of its late eighteenth-century Georgian inspired heritage. Lexington remained in the greater Mason family from its inception until the early twentieth century, and several well-known members of the Mason family are associated with the property. George Mason IV (1725-1792) likely played a major role, along with his son, George Mason V (1753-1796), in the design and development of the entire property. Richard Barnes Mason (1797-1850) and George Mason Graham (1807-1891), memorialized in California and Louisiana histories respectively, were born at Lexington. Largely unfettered by later modifications, the archaeological remains document a nearly pristine record of the original landscape design. The site is arranged symmetrically about a central north-south axis. The cellar of the former dwelling house rests as a focal node along the central axis and acts as a dividing point which separates the formal gardens to its south from the service area to its north.

Lexington is significant at the statewide level under National Register Criterion C in the area of landscape architecture for its still partially visible overall landscape design, which displays a blend or synthesis of scale with structures built to moderate size and gardens laid out to grand extent. The landscape design is certainly comparable to other period examples in eastern Virginia. Lexington, further, is significant, also at the statewide level, under Criterion D as a rare example of a largely intact archaeological representation of the late eighteenth-century fusion of Georgian landscape principles with local eastern and northern Virginia architectural traditions. The design and construction of the home seat is a reflection of the wealth derived from tobacco, while at the same time being a result of a synthesis of European influences and local tradition. The demise of the home seat after about 1818 is a product of the demise of tobacco due to the depletion of the soil and of the inability to replace it with equally lucrative agricultural alternatives. Within the immediate vicinity of the Lexington home seat, a number of research questions exist which can be addressed by future archeological investigations. The answers to these questions would impart a greater appreciation of the appearance and character of the home seat during the time of George Mason V and his family and would document its place within the context of the landed estates of the Northern Neck of Virginia. These answers, further, would supply an evidentiary basis for a visual reconstruction of the late eighteenth century home site through either traditional illustration or computer rendering. The information garnered from this research would contribute much to the understanding of late eighteenth/early nineteenth century estates and their difficulties in transitioning away from tobacco based economies. Lexington's period of significance begins circa 1784, the estimated date of construction of the buildings, and runs to 1818.

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Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Pre-Lexington Era (circa late 1600s to 1783)

The land within the near vicinity of the later Lexington home seat was the site of some of the earliest infrastructure developments within Northern Virginia. A road connecting Colchester near the mouth of the Occoquan River with planters and tenants along the southern end of the then Dogue Neck was blazed by the end of the seventeenth century and remained in effect as a public road until about 1758. It was later converted into a plantation road to service the various Mason quarters and is evident today as an archaeological road trace. Following shortly after the construction of this road, a grist mill was constructed during the late 1600s on a tributary of Baxter's (presently Kane's) Creek. One of the buildings associated with this mill was subsequently utilized as slave housing for the Lexington Quarter. Traces of the mill complex are represented today in the archaeological remnants of the earthen dam and raceway. A third component of the late seventeenth-century infrastructure developments was a bridge across Baxter's Creek. This bridge's location is indicated by the archaeological traces of the old road's approaches to and from the bridge. All three of these infrastructure components are among the earliest such archaeologically extant features within Northern Virginia.

Lexington Era (circa 1784-1818)

The period from 1784 to 1818 represents the florescence of the Lexington home seat. While its exact time of construction and the names of its designer and builder are not known with certainty, it is suspected that the development of the main grounds and buildings began circa 1784 and that both George Mason IV and his son, George Mason V, played major roles. Construction was largely complete by 1788.

Lexington was named in commemoration of the April 19, 1775 Battle of Lexington.² The home seat was built for George Mason V, the eldest son of George Mason IV, sometime after his return from France. Advertisements for a builder which appeared in several local newspapers during the spring of 1784 suggest that construction may have begun in that year.³ It was also during this time that George Mason V married Elizabeth Mary Ann Barnes Hooe. A tax list from 1785 indicates that the dwelling house had not been completed at the time of the assessment.⁴ The earliest document suggesting that the house had been occupied is a May 20, 1787, letter addressed to George Mason V at Lexington.⁵ The house had not been entirely finished, however, as a June 1, 1787 letter discussed the matter of plastering the walls.⁶

George Mason V would not legally own the lands upon which Lexington had been constructed until after the death of his father on October 7, 1792.⁷ He would continue to reside there until his own death four years later on December 5, 1796. Of the six children he had with Elizabeth, three are known to have been born at Lexington prior to his demise: William Eilbeck Mason (February 3, 1788), Ann Eilbeck Mason (April 1, 1791), and Sarah Barnes Hooe (May 27, 1794).

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Study of the archaeological remains of the various structures and landscape elements indicates that the home seat's design was a fusion of contemporary landscape styles with local architectural traditions. The precision with which the various elements of the home seat were laid out within the symmetrical landscape plan indicates that they were laid out with a transit compass and that the distances were measured. The detail with which the grounds had been laid out, further, suggests that a preliminary topographic survey had been conducted of the future home seat and that an excavation and grading plan had been prepared prior to the onset of work, with careful consideration being given to the location and size of each of the landscape elements which were to be installed. The amount of earth moved in creating the contours of the site indicate that drag plows or similar implements were employed to sculpt the terrain. Overall, considerable skill in landscape design and engineering implementation are reflected in the execution of the resulting landscape.

The general orientation and layout of the Lexington grounds are remarkably similar to the Georgian inspired landscape of Hampton Mansion in Towson, Maryland (built circa 1783-1788). Both were constructed on a symmetrical ground plan about a central axis and with dramatic terraces or "falling gardens." In each instance, the terraced gardens were a continuation of and elaboration upon earlier eighteenth century expressions such as Palace Gardens in Williamsburg and Kingsmill Plantation and Carters Grove in James City County. Compared to the gardens at Kingsmill and Carter's Grove, the garden at Lexington is somewhat smaller. Kingsmill's garden measured 220 feet by 500 feet while Carter's Grove's garden measured 242 feet by 540 feet.⁸ In comparison, the Lexington garden measures 190 feet by 405 feet from the south side of the dwelling house to the base of the Third Terrace. Its length, however, would be comparable if the Front Lot were added. Their respective width-to-length ratios are 44.0%, 44.8%, and 46.9% indicating similarity in their proportionality. Unlike the earlier gardens, however, where the terraces act as a brief transition from the yard area fronting the dwelling house to a broad expanse of level gardens, the terraces at Lexington play a more prominent role in the landscape design. Indeed, if the Front Lot is not considered, the terraces occupy all of the terrain formerly assigned to the lower garden plots. This expanded presence is accentuated not only by their increased lengths but, further, by the heightened depth of the fall in elevation from one terrace surface to the next. This results in altered perspectives where the dwelling house is no longer visible from the end of the garden and the lower two terraces are no longer visible from the dwelling house.

The Lexington grounds are bisected with floral gardens and walkways creating a formal space to the south side of the main domicile and with outbuildings and work areas providing a utilitarian space to the north side. In addition, each of the two spaces is further segmented into bisymmetrical zones about a central axis. Within the utilitarian space, the right or east-oriented zone is dedicated to "clean" activities (i.e., an office and dairy); the left or west-oriented zone, to "dirty" activities (i.e., kitchen/food preparation and smokehouse). The implementation of the symmetrical placement of the landscape and architectural elements indicates an extensive understanding of mathematical and surveying skills and perhaps is an indication of the role of George Mason IV who was well versed in both disciplines.

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Several other aspects of the Lexington home seat indicate a thorough knowledge and appreciation of perspective and of how to implement and enhance it. These aspects include its elevated location along a ridge line essentially opposite Gunston Hall and its deep vistas towards the Potomac River on the south and the Occoquan Bay on the west. Varying perspectives and views were presented by the distances between and the depths of the various lawn and terrace levels. So, depending upon where one stood as one walked along the garden paths varying focal points of near or distant interest presented themselves. The concept, design, and construction of a landscape capable of such evolving presentation were likely introduced to George Mason IV at Marlborough through his exposure during his youth to the extensive library of his guardian, John Mercer.

The construction of the terrace system at Lexington, as at Hampton Mansion, depended upon a detailed analysis of the existing topography and of how to modify it to implement the landscape design. For its time, the sculpting of the earth to yield not only the shape of the terrace system but also the viable fertility and appropriate drainage of the grounds was a monumental and complex task.

The main structures within the home seat were larger variations of traditional Virginia plantation dwellings and outbuildings. As at Gunston Hall, the near or primary set of outbuildings was set back and off set from the ends of the dwelling house. Perhaps in reflection of the economic constraints which had been imposed upon the Masons by the American Revolution and from which they had not yet fully recovered, the dwelling house was constructed of wood rather than brick. Nevertheless, unlike its companion Mason home seat of Gunston, Lexington possessed at least two expressions of wealth which the latter lacked, elaborate terraced gardens and a deep shaft icehouse. Of the latter, only a few others existed during the last quarter of the eighteenth-century (e.g., George Washington's at Mt. Vernon and Robert Morris' (later Presidential Home) in Philadelphia).

According to George Mason V's will, Lexington and the western half of his Mason Neck estate passed to his second eldest son, William Eilbeck Mason.⁹ In 1796, however, William had not yet reached his majority, and his newly acquired property was held in trust for him until 1809. Of the three quarters which lay within William's inherited property, two, Lexington and Dogue Neck, were reserved under George Mason V's will for the use of his widow, Elizabeth, during her natural life. A month after Mason's death, his last son, Richard Barnes Mason, was born on January 16, 1797 at Lexington. In 1803, she remarried, wedding George Graham, a nephew of George Mason IV's second wife, Sarah Brent. They were to have four children born at Lexington: John Graham (March 31, 1806), George Mason Graham (August 21, 1807), Richard Graham (unknown), and Mary Ann Jane Graham (February 13, 1811). Elizabeth Mason Graham died on May 28, 1814.

Richard Barnes Mason would enlist in the U.S. Army, eventually attaining the rank of Brigadier General. After serving in the Black Hawk War and the Mexican-American War, he would become the military governor of California from 1847 to 1849. He would die at Jefferson Barracks in Missouri in 1850. On November 25, 1882, the military post at Black Point, San Francisco Harbor, California was renamed Fort Mason in his honor by the President.¹⁰

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George Mason Graham would relocate to Louisiana where he would become a prosperous planter. He served in the Mexican-American War as a Captain in the Louisiana Volunteers. From 1866 to 1868, he served as Louisiana's Adjutant-General. From 1859 to 1883, he served as the vice-chairman of the board of supervisors of what would eventually become the Louisiana State University. His role in its creation would result in the sobriquet, "the Father of Louisiana State University." He died in 1891.

Upon his mother's death, William ostensibly assumed full control over his property. On July 3, 1817, he married Salome Caroline Edelen of Prince Georges County, Maryland. No children were born of this union. She died in 1819. He died the following year in 1820. During the fall of 1818, he divested himself of his Mason Neck estate, maintaining only a lease with a subsequent owner on the Sycamore fishery. To clear his title of an encumbrance which provided access to timber on his lands to his elder brother George Mason VI, he sold to him a 55-acre tract along the Poplar Branch on October 24, 1818.¹¹ Then, he sold 1450 acres off the southern part of his estate to his uncle, John Mason on November 9, 1818.¹² On the following day, he then leased back rights to the lucrative Sycamore fishery.¹³ On November 11, 1818, he sold the final piece of his Mason Neck estate which included Lexington and the northern part of his property comprising 1321 acres to his cousin, William Stuart Mason.¹⁴ On the same date, he recorded the transfer of his 26 slaves from Virginia to Charles County, Maryland, signaling his relocation to Southern Maryland.¹⁵

Post-"Lexington" Decline (1819-1903)

Although "Lexington" remained within the greater Mason family until the early twentieth century, the estate began a period of extended decline and neglect with its fragmentation in 1818. This decline reflected a prolonged series of agricultural and financial depressions which occurred during the tenure of its last owners, the sons and grandchildren of George V's brother, William of Mattawoman.

The parcel purchased by William Stuart Mason would become known as the Lexington Tract. During his ownership, he would be plagued by various financial difficulties. Those difficulties would hamper his ability to maintain the home seat and the surrounding tract. Nevertheless on January 2, 1824, he purchased from George Mason VI the 55 acre parcel along Poplar Branch which had previously been sold out of the Lexington estate.¹⁶ This deed indicates that William Stuart Mason was residing at Lexington at that time. By 1833, his financial situation was such that 500 acres off the southwest corner of his property had to be sold to George H. Smoot to settle debts.¹⁷ Despite this sale, financial obligations continued to haunt him during his ownership. After exhausting his use of the Lexington Tract as collateral, he placed his personal property in trust on August 10, 1836.¹⁸ By 1851, his financial situation had reached a critical juncture. On December 5, 1851, the courts decreed the sale of the Lexington Tract to his younger brother, George Mason of Hollin Hall/Spring Bank.¹⁹ After the sale, William Stuart Mason would continue to live at Lexington until his death in March 1857. By the end of William Stuart Mason's ownership, Lexington was being described by a member of the Smoot family thusly, "[The] Buildings on Lexington ... needed many and

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costly repairs and for all useful purposes would cost more to put them in a proper state of repair than they would be worth to the estate in its present uncultivated condition."²⁰

George Mason of Hollin Hall's own financial difficulties would cause him to attempt to sell the Lexington Tract.²¹ A suitable sale, however, was not accomplished during his lifetime. He died on March 25, 1870, leaving Lexington to his son, George Mason.²² In 1879, the Lexington dwelling house burned to the ground. On the second George Mason of Spring Bank's death on April 19, 1888, the tract would pass to his sister, Kora Mason Chase.

On July 1, 1895, Kora Chase initially sold the tract to Emory W. Chesley, Alida Chesley, Edward Chesley, and Octavius Chesley.²³ Given the number of land transactions involving the Chesleys which were recorded in the Fairfax County Deed Books, it is likely that the tract had been purchased for speculative purposes. During their ownership, the tract would be renamed, "Moreen." On July 3, 1902, unable to finalize payment on their purchase, the Chesleys returned the tract to Kora Chase.²⁴ A year later on February 6, 1903, Kora Chase sold the Lexington Tract to James D. Yeomans.²⁵

Land Speculators (1903-1965)

After the sale of Lexington out of the Mason family, the tract entered an extended phase of ownership by influential and wealthy individuals who hoped to profit by developing the resources of the tract. During this period, home seat continued its decline through neglect.

James D. Yeomans was a member of the Interstate Commerce Commission from 1894 to 1905 and was involved in local real estate ventures along with Frank D. Stout. On May 11, 1904, James D. Yeomans sold the Lexington Tract to the High Point Plantation Company of which he was the President.²⁶ The other major stockholders were Frank D. Stout and J.A.T. Hull. All were prominent Midwesterners with ties to the state of Iowa. Frank D. Stout was a wealthy lumberman. He was a principal in various companies including Knapp, Stout & Co. which at one time was considered the "greatest lumber corporation in the world." He was one of the richest men in America. J.A. T. Hull was a powerful Iowa congressman. He served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1891 to 1911, and prior to that had been an influential state politician. His wife was one of the founding incorporators of the Daughters of the American Revolution. James D. Yeomans died on October 31, 1906.

In 1908, the High Point Plantation Company was sued by several of its leading shareholders including JAT. Hull. As a consequence, the company was dissolved, and its property was sold at auction.²⁷ The purchasers were JAT. Hull, C.H. Smith, and Frank D. Stout. Each held an undivided 1/3 interest in the acquired property. The fifth parcel conveyed as a result of the auction was the 850 acre Lexington Tract. C.H. Smith was another Iowan. He was the founding partner and manager of Western Wheel Scraper Works. On September 25, 1910, C.H. Smith died at Aurora, Illinois. His interest in the former High Point Plantation Company property vested in his three daughters: Stella S. Sencenbaugh, Edna L. Smith, and Genevieve Smith Nash.²⁸ Edna L. Smith died childless, unmarried, and intestate. Genevieve Nash died childless, married, and testate. Her will, probated on May 9, 1922 in the Court of Probate in Stamford, Connecticut passed her interest to her two sisters. By deed, C.H. Smith's 1/3

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undivided interest was conveyed to the surviving daughter, Stella Sencenbaugh on September 29, 1923.²⁹ Stella Sencenbaugh was married to Charles W. Sencenbaugh, President of S.S. Sencenbaugh, Aurora, Illinois' leading dry goods store, and of Western Wheeled Scraper. Charles died in 1950; and Stella, in 1962. Stella Sencenbaugh sold her undivided 1/3 interest to Norma B. Hull on February 29, 1936.³⁰ Norma Hull was a socialite who had been married to JAT. Hull's son, John A. Hull. Hull was her second husband. They would divorce, and she would marry Sir Willmott Harsant Lewis on June 26, 1939 at Lorton, Virginia. She had two sons by her first marriage, Charles Bowler King and Ludlow King. By her second marriage, she had one son, John B. Hull. John A. Hull was an Iowa lawyer who later rose to the rank of Major General in the U.S. Army. In 1911, he was the youngest Colonel by 15 years in the U.S. Army.³¹ He served as Judge Advocate General from 1924 to 1928 and as an Associate Justice of the Philippines Supreme Court from 1932 to 1936. He died on April 17, 1944. Sir Willmott Lewis was a famous Washington correspondent for the London Times. Frank D. Stout died on October 11, 1927.³² His undivided 1/3 interest was placed in trust.³³ The trust sold Stout's interest to Norma B. Hull on February 29, 1936.³⁴ JAT. Hull died on September 26, 1928 at Clarendon, Virginia. His interest passed to his daughter, Annette Hull.³⁵ She conveyed her interest in two transactions to Norma B. Hull, one in 1935 and one in 1936.³⁶

In 1960, Norma B. King Hull Lewis formed the L-K-H Corporation and transferred her title to the former High Point Plantation Company property to it.³⁷ The corporation consisted of herself, her sons John B. Hull and Ludlow King, and their spouses. The L-K-H Corporation sold their interests to Wills & Van Metre, Inc. in 1965.

Mason Neck State Park (1968-Present)

On July 31, 1967, Wills & Van Metre, Inc. sold the then surveyed 1,829.86-acre tract to the Nature Conservancy. The section containing the Lexington Tract, in turn, was sold to the Commonwealth of Virginia as three parcels in 1968.³⁸ These lands are currently administered and managed as part of Mason Neck State Park.

General Comments

Due to the financial difficulties which befell its owners after 1818 and due to the resulting neglect of the home seat, Lexington represents an extremely rare archaeological example of an intact late eighteenth-century Georgian influenced cultural landscape. The archaeological remains of its main structures (dwelling house, outbuildings, and ancillary features), landscape elements (i.e., walks, roads, yards, terraces, and planting beds), and potential evidence of its planting scheme exist. Unlike the landscape associated with extant structures such as Gunston Hall and Hampton Mansion, the grounds have not undergone a series of subsequent modifications and redesigns. Hence Lexington captures a brief and essentially intact archaeological record with the potential to significantly inform our understanding of the dialogue between European landscape trends, local architectural traditions, regional preferences, practical considerations imposed by the times, and technical knowledge and expertise held by its creators.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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George Washington Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

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Gunston Hall Archives, Lorton, Virginia

Maryland Hall of Records, Annapolis, Maryland

NEWSPAPERS

Alexandria Advertiser (Alexandria, Virginia)

Fairfax Herald (Fairfax, Virginia)

Maryland Gazette (Annapolis, Maryland)

New York Times (New York, New York)

Washington Star (Washington, D.C.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA; Fairfax County Park Authority Resource Management Division, Falls Church, VA

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DHR #029-5612; DHR #44FX0736

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 12.1 acres

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Name of Property

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Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 18 | Easting: 310746 | Northing: 4281413 |
| 2. Zone: 18 | Easting: 310913 | Northing: 4281398 |
| 3. Zone: 18 | Easting: 310860 | Northing: 4281084 |
| 4. Zone: 18 | Easting : 310693 | Northing: 4281138 |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The 12.1 acre property being nominated is bounded by a quadrilateral whose corners are located at (1) 0310746 easting 4281413 northing; (2) 0310913 easting 4281398 northing; (3) 0310860 easting 4281084 northing; and (4) 0310693 easting 4281138 northing (Zone 18, NAD 83).

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The Lexington home seat National Register boundary encompasses the plateau upon which the dwelling house and primary outbuildings once stood and the immediately adjoining slopes into which the icehouse and garden terraces were cut.

—

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Paul Inashima/ DHR Staff
organization: Fairfax County Park Authority/ Department of Historic Resources
street & number: 2855 Annandale Road/ 2801 Kensington Avenue
city or town: Falls Church/ Richmond state: VA zip code: 22042/ 23221
e-mail lena.mcdonald@dhr.virginia.gov
telephone: 804-482-6439
date: _____

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

The following is the same for all photographs:

Lexington, Fairfax County, Virginia

Photographer: Paul Y. Inashima, Fairfax County Park Authority

Digital image files filed at Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA

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Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photograph 1 of 14

View: Dwelling house cellar, facing east

File: DSCN0522

Date: 11-24-2006

Photograph 2 of 14

View: Well wall

File: DSCN0347

Date: 10-7-2006

Photograph 3 of 14

View: Brick and cobble paving south of Structure 1W, facing north

File: IMG_5233

Date: 11-26-2006

Photograph 4 of 14

View: Cobble drive, facing west

File: DSCN0213

Date: 8-9-2006

Photograph 5 of 14

View: East-west cobble walk, facing south

File: DSCN0364

Date: 10-14-2006

Photograph 6 of 14

View: Gravel entry drive, facing north

File: DSCN0354

Date: 10-11-2006

Photograph 7 of 14

View: Cobble walk and brick pavement at Structure 1 E, facing southwest

File: IMG_5229

Date: 11-27-2006

Photograph 8 of 14

View: Southwest foundation corner of Structure 2W and cobble pavement, facing east

File: DSCN0682

Date: 11-27-2006

Photograph 9 of 14

View: West foundation wall of Structure 2E, facing south

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File: DSCN0619

Date: 11-27-2006

Photograph 10 of 14

View: Cobbles at base of support post of Structure 4W, facing west

File: DSCN0342

Date: 10-3-2006

Photograph 11 of 14

View: Icehouse pit, facing southwest

File: DSCN0428

Date: 10-28-2006

Photograph 12 of 14

View: Icehouse entry and antechamber, facing east

File: IMG_5280

Date: 11-27-2006

Photograph 13 of 14

View: Passage way and icehouse entry, facing east

File: IMG_5277

Date: 11-27-2006

Photograph 14 of 14

View: Center ramp from first to second terrace, facing north

File: DSCN0463

Date: 11-9-2006

Additional Documentation—ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE PLANS

1. Plan of Archaeological Test Units
2. Plan of Archaeological Features
3. Historic photograph of Structures 1W and 2W, facing northwest (date unknown)

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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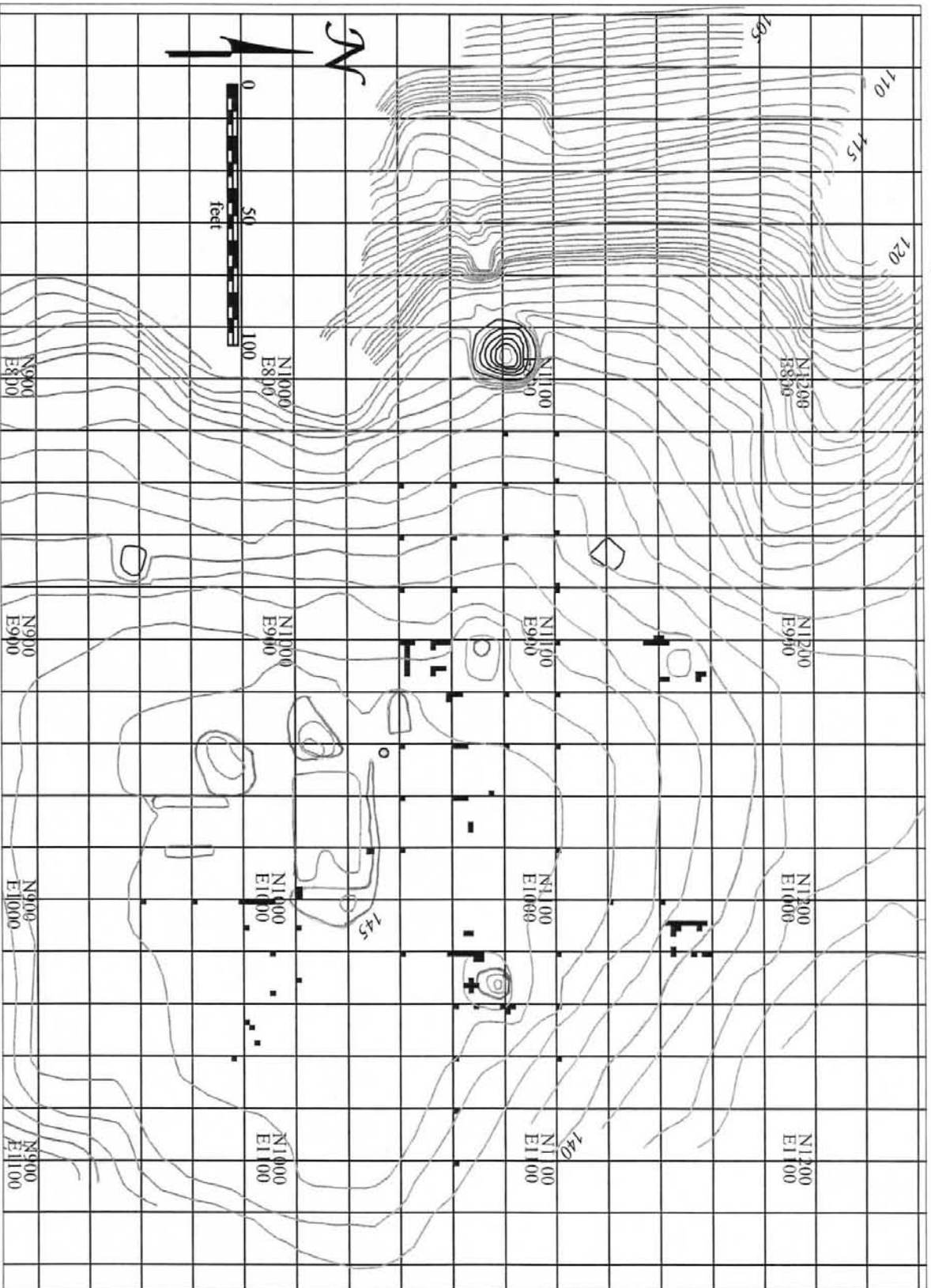
County and State

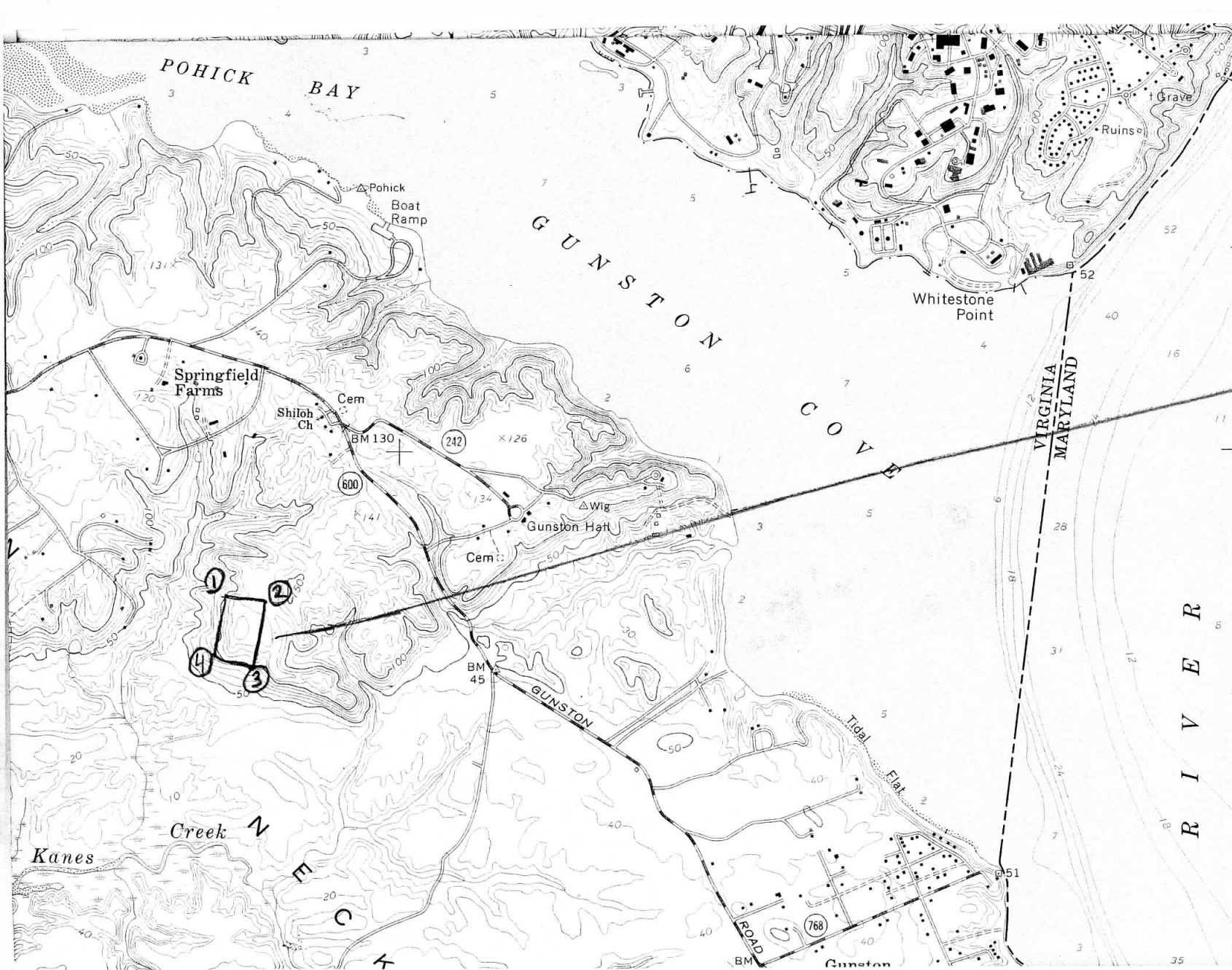
ENDNOTES

- 1 Washington Star, November 26, 1905.
- 2 John Mason transcribed in Rowland 1892.
- 3 Maryland Gazette, April 1, 1784.
- 4 U.S. Census Bureau 1908:85.
- 5 Robert Rutland, *The Papers of George Mason, 1725-1792*, 1970, (111):879-882.
- 6 Ibid, (111):890-891.
- 7 Fairfax County Will Book F1: 99ff.
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- 9 Fairfax County Will Book G1: 254-262.
- 10 General Orders No. 133.
- 11 Fairfax County Deed Book S2: 664-666.
- 12 Fairfax County Deed Book R2: 400-402.
- 13 Fairfax County Deed Book R2: 405-408.
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- 17 Fairfax County Deeds A3: 427-431.
- 18 Fairfax County Deed Book C3: 411-414.
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- 22 Fairfax County Will Book A2: 524.
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- 32 Fairfax County Will Book 12: 317.
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- 36 Fairfax County Deed Book T11: 358; Fairfax County Deed Book A12: 209.
- 37 Fairfax County Deed Book 2713: 362.
- 38 Fairfax County Deed Book 3065:437-443, 2968:545, and 2943:495.

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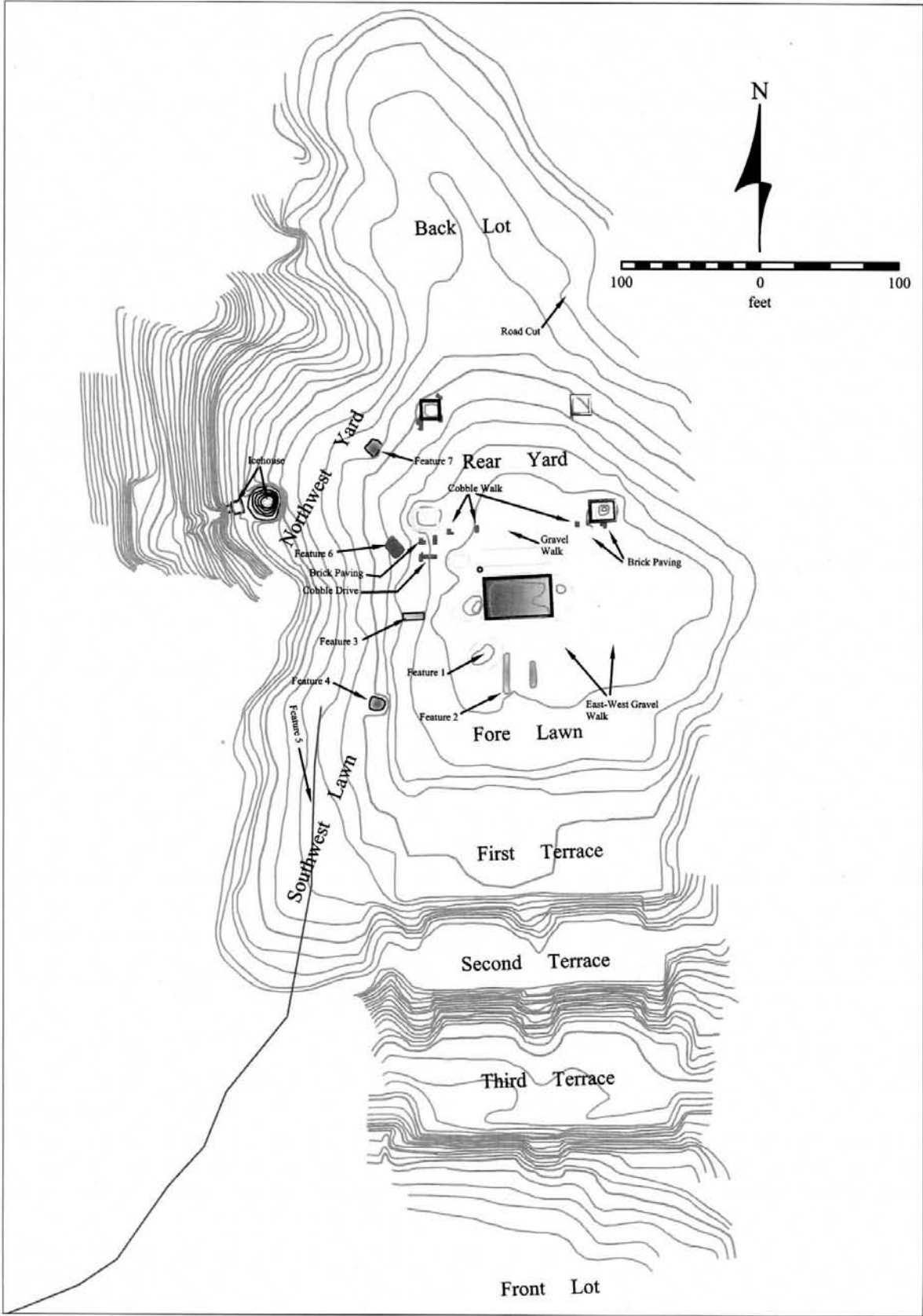
Figure 1



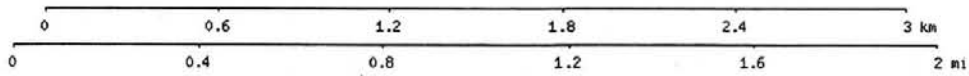
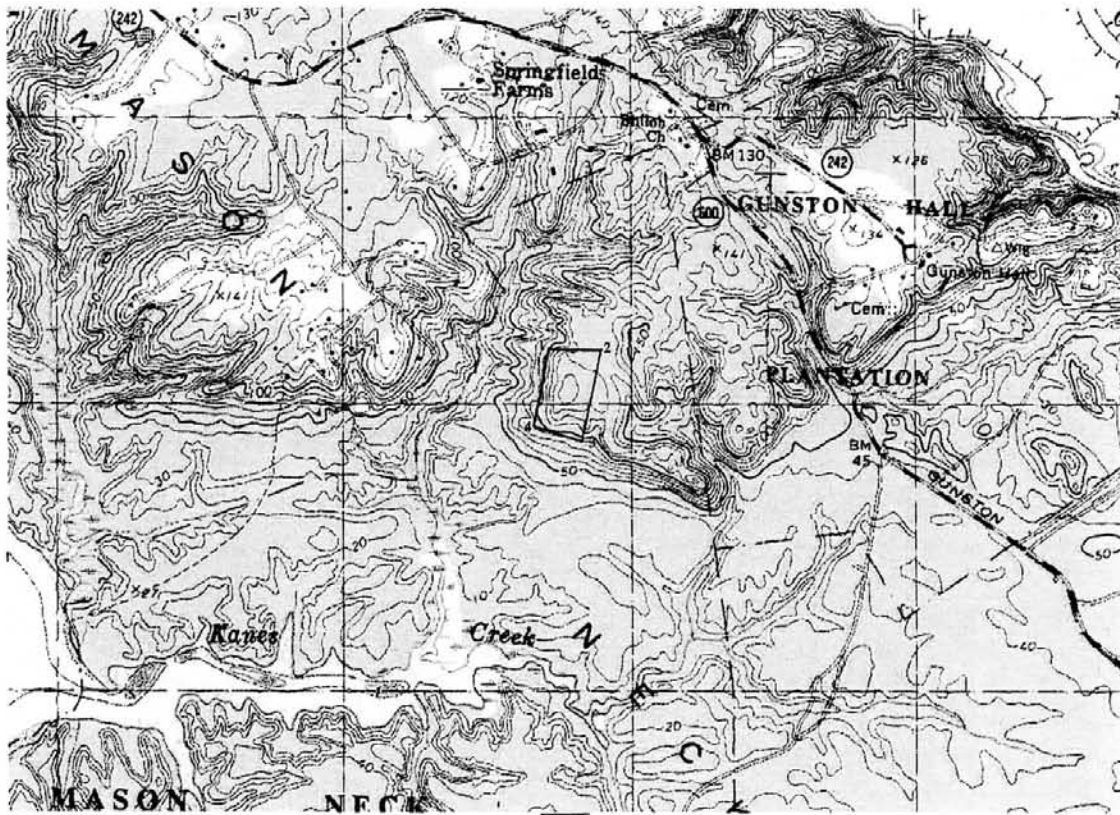


Lexington
 Fairfax County, VA
 DHR # 029-5612
 Ft. Belvoir, VA MD
 quad
 Zone
 UTM's

- ①
- ②
- ③
- ④



7.5-minute U.S.G.S. Fort Belvoir Quadrangle
Lexington, Fairfax County, Virginia



M=-10.551
G=-1.359