

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Virginia	
COUNTY: James City	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Stone House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
South Bank of Ware Creek, .8 miles East of Rt. 600

CITY OR TOWN:
Toano vicinity

STATE Virginia	CODE 51	COUNTY: James City	CODE 095
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) unexposed

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY A. T. Dill, Director of Public Relations

OWNER'S NAME:
The Chesapeake Corporation of Virginia

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: West Point	STATE: Virginia	CODE: 23181
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
James City County Court House

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Williamsburg	STATE: Virginia	CODE: 51
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1972 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:
Room 1116 Ninth Street State Office Building

CITY OR TOWN: Richmond	STATE: Virginia	CODE: 51
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Virginia
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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated			
		(Check One) unexcavated			(Check One)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unexcavated	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Stone House site is situated on a small knoll which rises sharply for some 100 feet above twisting Ware Creek, two miles south west of its mouth on the York River. Edmund Ruffin visited the building about 1841, and in a Farmers' Register article he commented on the difficult topography: "The site can be approached by land only by a long, wild and circuitous route, winding along on the ridge or backbone of this promontory, which is sometimes so narrow that two carts could not pass abreast." Ruffin wrote that the six mile walk from the mouth of Ware Creek was through "the most broken and desert country to be found east of the Blue Ridge", and that access from the water was equally difficult.

The structure was in ruins when Ruffin saw it, and although parts of the walls remained standing well into the twentieth century, all above-ground masonry has now disappeared. Foundation fragments, however, remain to corroborate nineteenth century descriptions. The rectangular building is said to have been 18 1/2 feet north to south and 15 feet east to west, with walls of rough ashlar, two feet thick at the base and 18 inches above. Parts of the foundations were uncovered for examination by Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission archaeologists in April, 1972, and they were found to be of uncut sandstone, two feet thick, 18 1/2 feet north to south and an indefinite length east to west. Ruffin wrote that the building had a basement "half below and half above the surface of the earth", with main story walls surviving to a height of 6 feet above floor level. Remains of an exterior chimney at the south end rose another 5 feet, and its 3 1/2 foot wide fireplace survived. A six foot wide doorway pierced the west wall and a three foot door the north end. The north door was flanked by two vertical slots which were tapered to a narrower width within.

Henry Howe included a wood-cut illustration of the Stone House ruin in his 1845 Historical Collections of Virginia although Howe may never have visited the site, and his illustration may have been taken from a picture supplied to him by a local resident, E. Galt. However, his illustration corresponds to written descriptions, and it conveys the strong defensive appearance spoken of by Ruffin and others.

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8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian 16th Century 18th Century 20th Century
 15th Century 17th Century 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Stone House, called in 1838 "one of the most antique buildings in this country", has long has the tradition of great age and romantic associations. No definite date of construction can now be attributed to it, although John Galt Williamson wrote in a letter of September 4, 1838: "I am informed by a very old man who acted as our guide [to the structure], that the oldest inhabitants when he was a boy could give no account whatever of the time or purpose of its erection". Williamson repeated the tradition that it was built by Blackbeard the pirate for storage of plunder, a legend that he writes caused many to dig for treasure, some supposedly with success. Henry Howe, writing in 1845, recorded two other local traditions: that the Stone House was built as a defense by Bacon's rebels in 1676 or was actually much earlier, being utilized "like the cave where Dido entertained Aenens, [as] a sort of rendezvous meeting-place of Captain Smith and Pocahontas"! Howe rejected these theories but did postulate that the structure was built by Smith as a defense, basing his theory on a passage from Smith's History of Virginia stating that he built a fort in a comparable location, "near a convenient river upon a high commanding hill, very hard to be assaulted."

Although the legends are imaginative, the building's claim to some antiquity is valid, and its form and location imply that it was built as a defensive outpost. The solid stone construction is unusual for Tidewater Virginia, and the building's inaccessible location seems to preclude any function except a defensive one. Access to the site by both land and water is difficult, and there is no cultivable land nearby. The necessity of a defensive outpost in this area would have been slight in the latter seventeenth and eighteenth centuries thus an earlier date for the structure is reasonable. A thorough archaeological investigation of the site might provide positive dating evidence for this unusual and fabled ruin.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Galt, Elizabeth, to Patrick H. Galt, circa 1843-44, manuscript letter, Galt Family Papers held by Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.
 Howe, Henry, Historical Collections of Virginia, Charleston, S.C., 1845, pp.390-392.
 Ruffin, Edmund, The Famers' Register, vol. IX (1841), pp. 710-711.
 Williamson, John Galt, to Alexander D. Galt, September 4, 1838, manuscript letter, Galt Family Papers hold by Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE			LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	37 °	26 ·	19 "	76 °	46 ·	31 "
NE	37 °	26 ·	19 "	76 °	46 ·	15 "
SE	37 °	25 ·	55 "	76 °	46 ·	15 "
SW	37 °	25 ·	55 "	76 °	46 ·	31 "

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 30 acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

January, 1972

STREET AND NUMBER:

Room 1116 Ninth Street State Office Building

CITY OR TOWN:

Richmond

STATE

Virginia

CODE

51

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name

J. R. Fishburne, Jr. Director
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

Title

Date

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

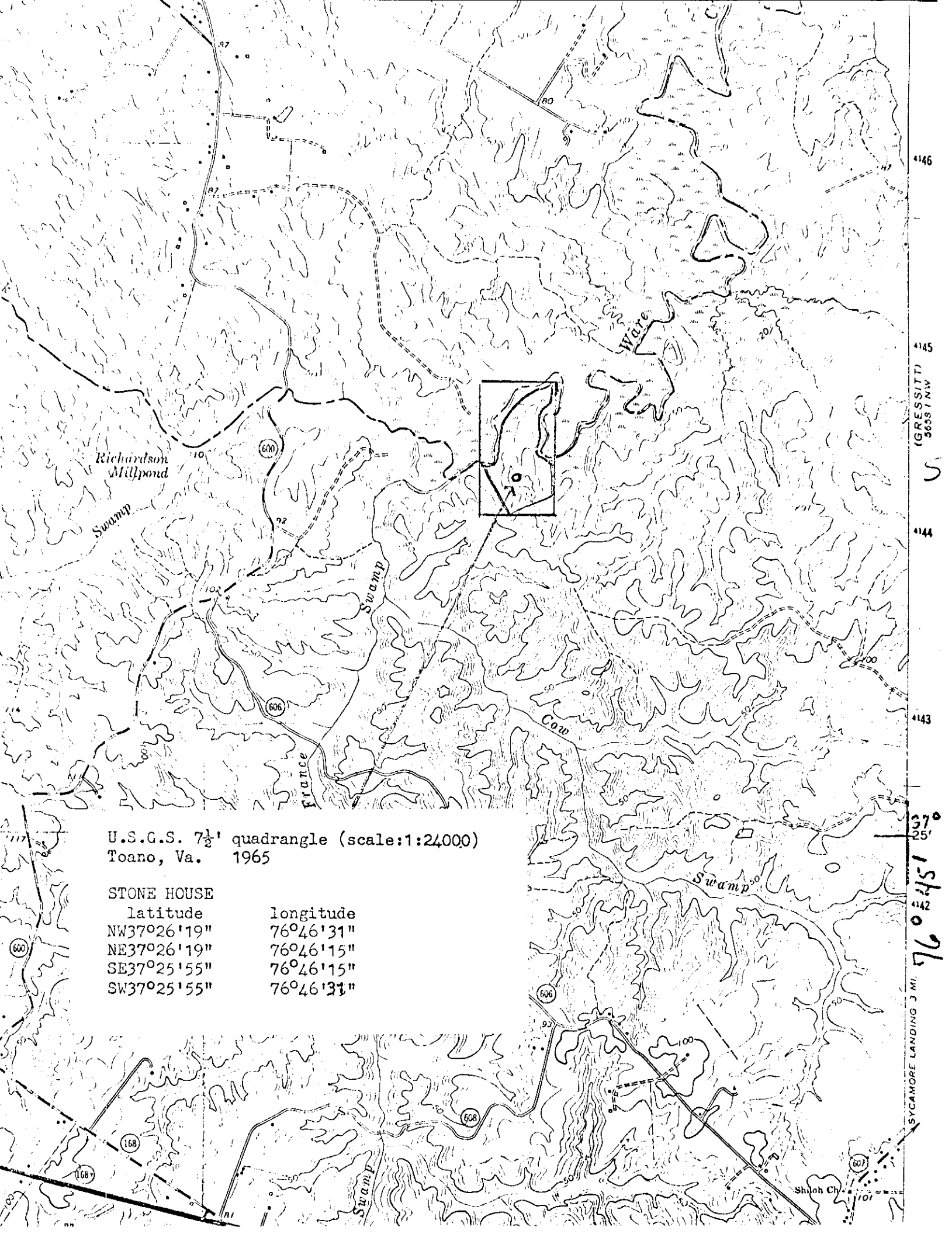
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date



U.S.G.S. 7½' quadrangle (scale:1:24,000)
 Toano, Va. 1965

STONE HOUSE	
latitude	longitude
NW37°26'19"	76°46'31"
NE37°26'19"	76°46'15"
SE37°25'55"	76°46'15"
SW37°25'55"	76°46'31"

4146
 4145
 (GROSSITT)
 56381 NW
 S
 4144
 4143
 37° 25'
 154° 45'
 76° 42'
 76° 45' 96
 SYCAMORE LANDING 3 MI.