

VLR-12/13/88 NRHP-6/16/89

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Pop Castle  
other names/site number DHL File No. 51-75

2. Location

street & number SR 659 NA not for publication  
state Virginia code VA county Lancaster code 103 zip code 22578

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>4</u>	<u>5</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.  
[Signature] April 14, 1989  
Signature of certifying official Date  
Director, VA Division of Historic Landmarks  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:  
 entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.  
 determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.  
 determined not eligible for the National Register.  
 removed from the National Register.  
 other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

## 6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: Single- and two-family  
dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: Single-family

## 7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls wood framing and sheathing

roof sheet metal

other brick chimneys

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

### Summary Description

Pop Castle is a substantial framed and weatherboarded house located at the end of State Road 659 southwest of White Stone in Lancaster County. Built in 1855, the standing structure rests partly on the foundations of an eighteenth-century dwelling. Like a score of other surviving structures that were built to celebrate a period of agricultural prosperity on Virginia's Northern Neck, Pop Castle has a two-story, single-pile, central-passage form embellished with Greek Revival and Italianate details. While Pop Castle has never been substantially altered, it has sustained several additions over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The nominated property consists of about twelve acres -- enough land to include the house and standing outbuildings, as well as the archaeological remains of most related service structures. This area encompasses, in addition to the nineteenth-century farmhouse itself, two other contributing structures. These are an antebellum granary and a roughly contemporary smokehouse. There are also five noncontributing outbuildings. The earliest of these is a turn-of-the-century dairy. The others -- a decorative well cover, a pump house, a workshop, and a building constructed to function as both a garage and a stable -- all date to the 1940s. There is also included one contributing site, the remains of a small nineteenth-century kitchen.

### Architectural Analysis

Pop Castle faces south on a level site that slopes gradually southward down to the Rappahannock River. Mature trees shade the yard around the house, which is defined on the east and west by two fencelines and on the north by a row of small wood-framed outbuildings. Toward the south, the house has an unobstructed view of the river.

The earliest section of Pop Castle is not visible above ground level. The eastern two-thirds of the main block rests on a brick cellar with fifteen-inch walls, laid in English bond. The exterior dimensions of this subterranean structure are about 32 by 20 feet. On the east end of the cellar is the base of an exterior chimney with an arched firebox. This fireplace has dimensions and fittings associated with cooking. There is no corresponding chimney on the west end wall, although a large and irregular section of patched brick may indicate the previous existence of such a feature. Original access to this cellar was through a bulkhead entrance situated on the north wall near the cellar's northeast corner. This opening has been bricked over and its function replaced by a bulkhead entrance situated on the east wall between the structure's northeast corner and the chimney cheek. It is likely that this change occurred either

See continuation sheet

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture  
Military History

Period of Significance

1785 - 1865

Significant Dates

1855  
1861

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Statement of Significance

Pop Castle is a largely unaltered example of the sort of substantial dwelling that prosperous farmers began to build on Virginia's Northern Neck during the late 1840s and throughout the 1850s. Moreover, its architectural importance is enhanced by the nature of the additions it sustained over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Structural and documentary evidence indicates that Pop Castle has accommodated several overlapping circulation patterns and, during at least one period of its history, two distinct households. This evidence is especially significant, for most existing studies of nineteenth-century American domestic architecture have focused on increasing demands for privacy and specialized room use. Pop Castle suggests that these needs were offset by flexible architectural strategies that could serve a number of functions simultaneously or serially.

Pop Castle is also of significance as a historical site. It dominates the location of a widely known eighteenth-century ferry landing. The present house is built on the foundation of a dwelling constructed during the 1780s by the last ferryman's son. Because of the property's accessible situation on a neck of land formed by Carter's Creek and the Rappahannock River, it was the scene of military action during both the War of 1812 and the Civil War. In the course of the latter conflict, Pop Castle was itself the subject of attack. The site received its colorful name in 1851, four years before the standing house was constructed and a decade before it was shelled by a Union steamer.

Historical Background

The plantation now known as Pop Castle has long been a familiar point of reference for Virginians living near the mouth of the Rappahannock River. Its accessible situation on a neck of land between the Rappahannock River and Carter's Creek has strongly -- and, on occasion, dramatically -- shaped its history. The site was part of a 373-acre tract granted by Governor Berkeley to Robert Griggs, a prominent Lancaster County

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

William Waller Hening, Statutes at Large: A Collection of All the Laws of Virginia (Philadelphia: 1823), v. 3, pp. 218-220.

Virginia Gazette [Purdie and Dixon] November 3, 1766, p. 2, col. 1.

Rawleigh Shearman to Martin Shearman, 6 June 1786, Lancaster County Deed Book 21, f. 76.

Will of Martin Shearman, proved 20 April 1814, Lancaster County Will Book 28, pp. 148-149.

Lancaster County Land Taxes 1792-1860.

Elizabeth Shearman to Thomas Armstrong, 18 July 1842, Lancaster County Deed Book 39, pp. 421-422.

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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 # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks  
221 Governor Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 12.1 acres

UTM References

A 18 374290 4166940  
 Zone Easting Northing

C 18 374170 4166580  
 Zone Easting Northing

B 18 374400 4166860  
 Zone Easting Northing

D 18 374040 4166650  
 Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of Pop Castle is shown as the solid line on the accompanying map entitled "Boundary Survey of the Land of Henry E. Stewart [and] Betty B. S. Stewart" and dated May 16, 1957, revised January 14, 1966.

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Boundary Justification

The Pop Castle nomination consists of 12.1 acres with legally recorded boundaries that represent the domestic core of the 50-acre tract conveyed to Martin Shearman from Rawleigh Shearman by deed dated 6 June 1786 and of the 272-acre plantation conveyed to James W. Gresham from Thomas and Ann Armstrong by deed dated 8 December 1851. The land is extensive enough to include the existing nineteenth-century farm buildings, the archaeological sites of most demolished outbuildings, and any  See continuation sheet archaeological sites associated with the river front.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Camille Wells

organization Program in American Studies date November 15, 1988

street & number College of William and Mary telephone (804) 253-7045

city or town Williamsburg state Virginia zip code 23185

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in 1855, when the main block of the present house was built, or in 1857, when construction of the east rear ell blocked the original access to the cellar.

The only other original openings in the cellar walls are sets of two and three beveled slots set into the north and south walls. These narrow openings were clearly meant to provide ventilation, and their situation near the west end of the cellar suggests that the structure was originally conceived as two spaces: one in which the heat of the cooking fireplace prevailed and one that could offer cool, dark storage. This division of function suggests that the present five-course common-bond partition wall, which dates from the construction of the 1855 house, probably replaces an original brick or wood framed wall.

As the cellar has become the center of a network of brick foundations beneath later sections of Pop Castle, builders have cut four additional openings into the walls to provide access to the various expanses of crawl space. The most recent change to the cellar is represented by an interior stairway, built beneath the nineteenth-century stair carriage during the 1940s.

The size and character of the Pop Castle cellar suggest that it is the base of a two-room dwelling built of wood to one and a half stories during the latter half of the eighteenth century. The household consisted of a roughly square hall set next to the chimney on the east gable end of the house. The smaller contiguous west chamber -- like the loft spaces above -- may have been entirely unheated. The residents of this structure served meals from the cellar kitchen, using foodstuffs kept cool in the storage facility at the west end of the cellar. It is possible that the surviving brick cellar at Pop Castle is the foundation for a house occupied by Ezekial and Winifred Gibson Gilbert as early as the 1740s, but the structure more likely represents the sturdy foundation of the house Martin Shearman built for his new wife during the 1780s.<sup>1</sup>

Above ground level, the eighteenth-century brick cellar is indistinguishable from the low common-bond brick foundations that support the rest of the house. The earliest portion of the standing structure, built in 1855, is a five-bay two-story framed and weatherboarded block measuring about 50 by 20 feet.<sup>2</sup> It has a single-pile, central-passage plan. At each gable end is an exterior chimney built of five-course common-bond brickwork. Both chimneys have one pair of stepped shoulders, indicating the presence of fireboxes on both the first and second stories of the house. The windows of the first story are glazed with nine-over-nine double-hung-sash windows. Those of the second story have six-over-six double-hung sash. The flanking louvred blinds are twentieth-century additions. The doorways that define the central bays on both the first and second stories of the facade are secured with four-panel doors. Pop Castle's existing porch has a one-story five-bay hipped-roof section that is presently enclosed with screens and louvred windows. The pedimented second-story porch is open, supported on slender Doric piers, and large enough to shelter only the central doorway.

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All material indications are that the existing porch dates from the middle of the twentieth century. That Pop Castle always had some sort of protected mediation between yard and entrance is suggested by one account of the 1861 incident at Pop Castle: a member of the Union landing party heard<sup>3</sup> "a man on the stoop" warn them that Confederate soldiers were drilling in the vicinity. The design and spacing of the Doric pilasters flanking the front doorway may well delineate the width of a one-bay porch with Greek Revival detailing. But two years later, when a court-appointed surveyor sketched Pop Castle on its 64-acre dower allotment, the only visible indication that Pop Castle was meant to<sup>4</sup> have a porch or stoop of any character was the disenfranchised second-story doorway.

The gable roof of the house has its original low-pitched angles, although the nineteenth-century covering of wood shingles has been replaced with standing-seam sheet metal. Beneath the sheathing survives the most graphic physical evidence of the shelling Pop Castle received during the Civil War: a hole in the nailers marking the path of a projectile that passed with considerable force through both planes of the main gable roof and through the west plane of the east ell roof. A missing stud on the north gable end of the east ell suggests that the projectile departed the house through that wall.

Like most Northern Neck houses of the period, Pop Castle is embellished with plain Greek Revival details. A straightforward box cornice marks the line where the roof meets the walls of the house. Window frames are unmolded. The main entrance is distinguished with sidelights flanked by pairs of Doric pilasters that support a flat Doric frieze, cornice, and shelf. On the interior, doorways are embellished with square-molded crossetted surrounds and secured with four-panel doors. The original mantels are fashioned into Doric architraves supported by heavy Doric pilasters. The most elaborately embellished original feature of Pop Castle is the stair. The end of each step is decorated with a flat scalloped and scrolled console. Rectangular-sectioned balusters support a polished walnut handrail. Set at the base of the stairs is a heavy tapered newel post, turned with Italianate profiles, that may represent a later alteration.

Two years after the original section of Pop Castle was completed, a two-story one-room ell was added to the north side of the house near its northeast corner. Like the original part of the house, the ell was constructed on a low brick foundation of wood framing members with weatherboard sheathing. It has a gable roof with angles that match those of the original house and an exterior brick chimney with stepped shoulders set high above the second-floor level. Unlike the original block of Pop Castle, the northeast ell has six-over-six double-hung-sash windows on both stories. The original function of both the first and second stories of this addition -- as a separate but attached household for the owner's mother<sup>5</sup> -- was accommodated by original access to the exterior on the east side of the ell.<sup>5</sup> There probably was a stairway providing independent access to the second story as well, but later additions to the appendage have obscured its location.

Although it was built just two years after Pop Castle was initially constructed,

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the northeast ell is distinguished by Italianate rather than Greek Revival decorations. On both the first and second stories, the four panels of each door are defined by distinctive rakish moldings. The pilasters, architraves, and shelves of the mantels have similarly shaped profiles. The door and window frames, however, remain plainly rectilinear.

The northwest ell of Pop Castle was built with dimensions, proportions, and details that match those of the northeast addition -- except that almost no distinguishing interior trim survives in this wing. It is thus difficult to assign a construction date to this appendage. A winder service stair is partly sheathed with matchboarding, which roughly dates its construction to the last quarter of the nineteenth century, but the stair itself may be an addition. It is even possible that the northwest ell was constructed during the original 1855 building campaign -- the potential locations of seams in the foundation have all been obscured by later additions. In any case, a one-room one-story shed-roofed extension was built onto the ell's gable-end wall during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The ghost of this enclosure survives in a series of holes cut into the northwest chimney. It served as a kitchen for the Pop Castle household until the middle of the twentieth century.

During the 1920s, a two-story one-bay extension was built onto the west gable end of the house. It has a low hipped roofline set well below the plane of the original gable roof. Six-over-six double-hung-sash windows illuminate the single first- and second-story rooms of this addition. To provide access to these new rooms, a doorway was cut into the west gable-end wall of the original 1855 house.

Around 1940, the kitchen was moved from the north shed addition to the principal room of the northwest ell. The kitchen shed was removed altogether and a one-story shed-roofed enclosed porch was built into the northwest angle created by the 1922 addition and the west ell. The last and most significant alteration to Pop Castle during this mid-twentieth-century campaign involved the construction of a two-story hyphen between the east and west ells. This enclosed corridor dramatically changed both first- and second-story patterns of circulation, allowing direct access between the two ells without intermediate passage through the main block of the house. This scheme of interior access was extended by the construction, beneath the original stair carriage, of an enclosed stair to the cellar. The first story of this 1940s hyphen is deeper than its second-story counterpart, allowing space for a foyer on the north side of the house which has, over time, become the principal point of entry into Pop Castle.

Throughout its history, the site of Pop Castle has served agricultural and commercial as well as domestic functions that require an assemblage of varied buildings. There are only documentary hints of the numerous buildings that Mottram Wright, Ezekial Gilbert, and Rawleigh Shearman must have constructed and employed to accommodate their successful enterprises as planters and ferrymen. In the 1780s, Martin Shearman busied himself with the construction of what was perhaps the third or fourth dwelling to stand on this long-inhabited riverside site. His will offers only a glimpse of the structural

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order he and his predecessors had imposed on the landscape. In his concern to enumerate the resources his sister-in-law should enjoy, he mentioned or alluded to his dwelling house, a fenced orchard and garden, boundary ditches, woodlots, and a windmill.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, James Gresham could not have benefitted from the renewed agricultural prosperity of the antebellum Northern Neck if he had not built and used a range of specialized agricultural structures. The dower allotment that his wife received in 1863 mentions only a fraction of his assets: slave quarters, a new stable, a cornhouse, and more fencelines.<sup>7</sup>

The surviving physical evidence at Pop Castle can augment -- but not complete -- the picture. During the 1970s, the archaeological remains of a small nineteenth-century kitchen were discovered some fifty feet to the north of the main house. The dating of artifacts proved inconclusive, but it is likely that the structure predated the present Pop Castle house. It was apparently demolished during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, at about the time the shed kitchen was added to the north of the house.<sup>8</sup>

When Edward Lemmon bought Pop Castle in 1939, he<sup>9</sup> acquired at least two early outbuildings, both located to the north of the house. A framed and weatherboarded smokehouse, measuring about 18 feet square, and a 10-by-24-foot wooden granary are probably contemporaries of the excavated kitchen -- and all are components of an assemblage of early nineteenth-century domestic outbuildings. A third structure -- a dairy or keeping room that measures about 7 feet by 12 feet -- represents a turn-of-the-century addition to the Pop Castle farmyard. Lemmon dragged these three structures to the north side of the lane that approaches the house. Over time, he filled the gaps between these buildings with a pumphouse, a shop, and a stable-garage. He also constructed a decorative cover for an early well situated closer to the house. All of these twentieth-century additions are constructed with wood framing and siding and are of a scale and design compatible with the nineteenth-century structures that keep them near company.

Notes

<sup>1</sup>The inventory of Gilbert's estate indicates that he lived in a hall-chamber house with a well-equipped kitchen located in the cellar or in the yard nearby. Inventory of Ezekial Gilbert's Estate, 17 July 1752, Lancaster County Deed/Will Book 15, pp. 110-112. Rawleigh Shearman's first deed of land to Martin Shearman mentions a newly built dwelling. Shearman to Shearman, 6 June 1786, Lancaster County Deed Book 21, f. 76.

<sup>2</sup>Lancaster Land Taxes of 1855 indicate a major building campaign at Pop Castle in 1855.



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<sup>3</sup>Richard Rush and Robert H. Woods, editors, Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1897), series 1, v. 5, p. 739.

<sup>4</sup>Assignment of Dower to Ann E.R. Gresham 19 January 1863, Lancaster County Land Causes 1841-1885, pp. 276-277.

<sup>5</sup>Lancaster County Land Taxes indicate a \$500 increase in the value of buildings at Pop Castle in 1857. Gresham indicated in his will that the northeast ell had been inhabited by his mother. Will of James W. Gresham, 11 May 1862, Lancaster County Will Book 30, pp. 10-12.

<sup>6</sup>Will of Martin Shearman, proved 20 April 1814, Lancaster County Will Book 28, pp. 148-149.

<sup>7</sup>Assignment of Dower to Gresham, 1863.

<sup>8</sup>Nina Tracy Mann, "Pop Castle: Old Kitchen," unpublished archaeological site report written in 1974 and in the possession of Thomas B. Denegre, Jr. and Louise R. Denegre at Pop Castle.

<sup>9</sup>Mamie McL. Sanders to Edward T. Lemmon, 12 September 1939, Lancaster County Deed Book 73, p. 362.

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planter, in 1670.<sup>1</sup> At his death, the land in question became the property of Griggs's daughter. The core of the tract -- always varying in acreage -- passed from Ruth Griggs among her female descendants in unbroken succession through the end of the colonial period.

The land was inhabited as early as 1702, by which date Mottram Wright, Ruth Griggs's second husband, had begun using the property as a ferry landing.<sup>2</sup> An official "act for the regulation and settlement of ferreys" established the price for transport from "Martram Wright's plantation" to Dudley's across the Rappahannock River in Middlesex County at fifteen pence for a man -- and twice that amount if he was on horseback.<sup>3</sup> Wright's Ferry proved a convenient point of departure and arrival for travel across the river, for the plantation hosted a ferry throughout the eighteenth century.

Although his is the first name associated with the site, Wright's landholdings remained legally the property of his wife Ruth Griggs, who eventually conveyed them to her three children by a subsequent marriage to Robert Gibson.<sup>4</sup> Winifred Gibson, one of these three offspring, married Ezekial Gilbert in 1722 and the couple established their household on the Wright's Ferry tract.<sup>5</sup> That they led a prosperous life is certain from the inventory made of Gilbert's estate after his death in 1752.<sup>6</sup> That they continued to operate the ferry business is also certain. By 1766, the grown daughter of Ezekial and Winifred Gilbert had married Rawleigh Shearman, who purchased an informative advertisement in the Virginia Gazette.

I hereby acquaint the publick that the ferry in the lower part of Lancaster county, on Rappahannock river, commonly known by the name of Gilbert's will by the 1st of April next be kept by the subscriber in very good order; where all persons may depend upon a ready passage, and meeting with good entertainment both for themselves and attendants. There will be tolerable passage at the said ferry from the date hereof. All persons who shall please to favor me with their custom will greatly oblige their humble servant

Rawleigh Shearman.<sup>7</sup>

Rawleigh and Elizabeth Gilbert Shearman continued their lucrative ferry business into the 1770s, for "Shearman's Ferry" is mentioned once more in a Virginia Gazette advertisement for a lost boat.

By the time of the Revolution, the Shearmans' son Martin was old enough to participate as a midshipman in the Virginia State Navy.<sup>9</sup> By 1786, he had returned to Lancaster County, married Alice Tapscott, and built a new house on his family's ferry-landing tract.<sup>10</sup> The 1786 deed of gift from his parents describes the 50-acre site on the Rappahannock River as that "whereon the said Martin Shearman's dwelling house now stands."<sup>11</sup> Although no description of Shearman's house survives, it is probably his 32-by-20-foot brick cellar that supports part of the present Pop Castle.

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In 1792, Martin Shearman bought the remaining 136 acres of the ferry-landing tract from his father. Over subsequent years, he increased the size of the ferry-landing tract and made other purchases of Lancaster County land as well. Between 1792 and 1799 he served as Lancaster County's commissioner for the collection of taxes, and in 1796 he was considered suitable for appointment as county sheriff.<sup>12</sup> In these respects, he was the only owner of the Pop Castle tract who ever led an active public life.

During the War of 1812, Shearman's low riverside plantation with its agreeable landing made him vulnerable to British attack. In early April of 1813, Spencer George of the Lancaster County Militia requested assistance "in the present emergency."

The Enemy is here upon us, landing and doing mischief every day. Our Militia had an engagement at Chewning's Point yesterday and the balance that are stationed at Martin Shearman's, where I had a little scuffle this morning without any injury.<sup>13</sup>

A year later, four British barges rowed or sailed up the Rappahannock River and into Carter's Creek, where they captured two small schooners and a quantity of provisions, including "some sheep belonging to the Estate of Martin Shearman, Esqr., lately deceased."<sup>14</sup>

Martin Shearman, having survived his wife and any children of their marriage, conveyed to his brother Ezekial Gilbert Shearman "the plantation whereon I now live." Because Ezekial Shearman's household was established elsewhere in the county, Martin Shearman felt comfortable in giving the use of his house, orchard, windmill, and a quantity of the surrounding 272 acres to Polly Tapscott "in consequence of her particular care and attention to my domestic concerns since the death of my loving wife her sister."<sup>15</sup>

Polly Tapscott may have been the last family member to inhabit the two-room frame dwelling that Martin Shearman had built during the 1780s. The tract she dwelled upon remained identified in the Lancaster County land taxes as part of "Martin Shearman's estate." After Ezekial Shearman's death in 1831, his holdings were also taxed as part of the family's estate.<sup>16</sup> This unresolved state of affairs persisted until 1842, when the Shearman land was sold to satisfy Ezekial Shearman's longstanding debts to the estate of John Fleet. At the public auction, Martin Shearman's home plantation was purchased by Fleet's administrator, Thomas Armstrong.<sup>17</sup>

Thomas Armstrong was a native of Ireland, but he was living in Virginia by 1814, when he served as an artillery captain in the Lancaster County militia.<sup>18</sup> It is possible that he first noticed the Shearman's Rappahannock River plantation as the setting of skirmishes with the British during the War of 1812. Armstrong never lived on the land he acquired from the Shearman settlement. By the time he bought the place, he was ensconced at a large and expensively improved tract of land on Fleet's Island.<sup>19</sup>

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It is possible that he bought the tract in 1842 for his daughter Ann, who married James W. Gresham a few months later.<sup>20</sup> In any case, Armstrong continued to pay taxes on the Shearman tract until 1851, when he sold it to Gresham for \$4,000.<sup>21</sup> That same year, the tract is first identified in the tax lists as "Pop Castle."<sup>22</sup>

James and Ann Armstrong Gresham may have been living at Pop Castle as early as 1842, making their home in the small frame dwelling constructed by Martin Shearman some seventy years before. In 1855, they demolished this structure and built, partly on Shearman's substantial brick cellar, a new two-story frame house -- the surviving Pop Castle. Just two years later, they added a two-story frame ell to their already spacious dwelling.<sup>23</sup> The source of the Greshams' prosperity and optimism was probably that which had renewed the economy of the entire Northern Neck during the 1850s. Lancaster County enjoyed ready access by water to Baltimore, where hearty markets existed for the small grain crops that farmers had learned to encourage with fertilizer.<sup>24</sup>

During the Civil War -- once more the apparent victim of its inviting riverside site -- Pop Castle sustained an attack by Union forces. On 24 June 1861 the commander of the U.S.S. Monticello sent a launch ashore at Pop Castle, looking for information concerning the location of a Confederate steamer he hoped to capture near the mouth of the Rappahannock River. Gresham, known to the pilot of the Monticello as a Union sympathizer, emerged from his house and greeted the crew of the launch.<sup>25</sup> The commander of the Union steamer plainly saw Gresham shake hands with members of the landing party, but a Confederate officer's report, taken from Gresham's account, described the meeting differently.

One of the party accosted Mr. Gresham and introduced another of the party.... He enquired if he had any chickens or lambs for sale. Mr. Gresham replied that he had a plenty, but not a d----d one for that party. He then took the pilot aside and told him they had better be getting away, as there were troops in the neighborhood, and that he did not wish his premises to be the scene of a battle, as his mother was very ill in the house. While they were talking a small company of Lancaster troops, about thirty in number, were seen coming down the road in double-quick time.<sup>26</sup>

This party of Confederates -- the officers of the Monticello thought there were about eighty soldiers -- swarmed across the yard of the house and began firing on the landed crew members. The Union sailors returned fire, retreated to their boat, and left the shore. Both the launch and the Monticello turned their guns toward Pop Castle, firing repeatedly to overcome their rebel assailants and damage the house of the treacherous Gresham. The Union commander reported that he had demolished Pop Castle.<sup>27</sup> Confederate accounts indicated that the house sustained about \$1,000 worth of damage.

James Gresham never lived to see Pop Castle repaired. During his last months he thought of himself as "a farmer and peaceable citizen" unfairly plagued with chaotic

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affairs. His new house was so damaged that he was forced to move his wife and mother to another dwelling place. Union craft continued to prowl the coasts of the Rappahannock River and Carter's Creek, menacing his livestock and enticing his slaves to desert their stations.<sup>28</sup> His will of 1862 represents an attempt to impose some enduring order on his upset household.

I lend to my wife during her natural life my plantation called Pop Castle except that wing of the dwelling house in which my mother lived when I resided at that place and before I moved from there on account of the bombardment of my house in June last: which wing including the upper and lower story I give my mother for her residence after the said house shall have been repaired (which I have contracted with Mr. Edwin O. Robinson to do) during her life and after her death I lend the said wing of the dwelling house to my wife during her life....And at her death, I give devise and bequeath the said plantation...to James Robert<sup>29</sup> Gresham son of my relative Samuel Gresham and to his heirs forever.

Ann Armstrong Gresham was apparently annoyed with the preemptory provisions her husband made for her: possession of the original section of Pop Castle during the lifetime of her mother-in-law and the right to occupy only the northeast ell thereafter. Just months after Gresham's death, she appealed to the Lancaster County Court to assign her a plain widow's third of his property. A surveyor promptly drew specific boundaries of Ann Gresham's 64-acre dowery interest. The map of her holdings, accepted by the county court on 19 January 1863, contains a sketch of Pop Castle made less than ten years after its construction. The accompanying description of the boundaries includes the only surviving indication of Pop Castle's farmstead surroundings.

running just in rear of negro quarter over the ravine from the dwelling... and running down the center of this fence in rear of said quarter, passing north of the new Stable...passing South of the Cornhouse...<sup>30</sup>

Sometime between 1863 and 1875, Pop Castle descended to James W. Gresham's nephew and intended heir, James R. Gresham. This younger member of the Gresham family may never have lived in Lancaster County. Between 1875 and 1882, he gradually sold Pop Castle in sections to Romulus Sanders, who already owned quantities of contiguous property. In return, Sanders lent his help in discharging the debts of Gresham's business in Baltimore.<sup>31</sup> Various members of the Sanders family owned the house and surrounding farm into the twentieth century, and it is probably they who added the two-story northwest ell to the house.<sup>32</sup> In 1939 Mamie Sanders conveyed Pop Castle and fifty acres to Edward T. Lemmon, who built most of the outbuildings that line the north edge of the yard.<sup>33</sup> Pop Castle changed hands twice more between 1957 and 1969, when it was acquired by the present owners, Capt. and Mrs. Thomas B. Denegre, Jr.<sup>34</sup>

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Notes

<sup>1</sup>William Berkeley to Robert Griggs, 16 August 1670, Virginia Land Office Patent Book 6, p. 318. This patent identifies the land as lying on "ye maine river side" and bounded partly by Slaughter's Creek. A 1668 patent indicates that Slaughter's Creek was "alias Johns Cr. & now known as Coll. Carter's Creek." Carter's Creek is the present name of the branch that flows to the north of Pop Castle. Virginia Land Office Patent Book 6, p. 136. Griggs's prominent social and economic standing are evident from the analyses of court records in Robert Anthony Wheeler, "Lancaster County, Virginia, 1650-1750: The Evolution of a Southern Tidewater Community" (Dissertation: Brown University, 1972) pp. 35-77.

<sup>2</sup>"Mottram-Wright-Spencer-Ariss-Buckner," William and Mary Quarterly, series 1, 17 (1908-1909), pp. 53-57. Charles Arthur Hoppin, "Some Descendants of Richard Wright, Gentleman, of London, England, and Northumberland, Virginia, 1655," Tyler's Quarterly, 1 (1919-1920), pp. 127-141, 177-191. "Chart from the Belfield Prayerbook," William and Mary Quarterly, series 1, 8 (1899-1900), p. 100. "Virginia Gleanings in England," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 13 (1906-1907), pp. 191-205.

<sup>3</sup>William Waller Hening, Statutes at Large: A Collection of All the Laws of Virginia (Philadelphia: 1823), v. 3, pp. 218-220.

<sup>4</sup>Will of Ruth Griggs Mottram Wright Gibson, proved 11 May 1739, Lancaster County Deed/Will Book 13, p. 132.

<sup>5</sup>Marriage of Ezekial Gilbert and Winifred Gibson, September 4, 1722, Lancaster County Marriage Bonds, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup>Inventory of Ezekial Gilbert's Estate, 17 July 1752, Lancaster County Deed/Will Book 15, pp. 110-112.

<sup>7</sup>Virginia Gazette [Purdie and Dixon] November 3, 1766, p. 2, col. 1. The connection between the Gilberts is made explicit in a marriage contract between Elizabeth Gilbert and Rawleigh Shearman dated 29 June 1756. The document mentions that Elizabeth's father, Ezekial Gilbert, is dead. Lancaster County Marriage Bonds, p. 26.

<sup>8</sup>Virginia Gazette [Rind] March 12, 1772, p. 3, col. 3.

<sup>9</sup>"Officers of the Virginia Navy During the Revolutionary War," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 1 (1893), p. 63.

<sup>10</sup>"Marriage Bonds in Lancaster County," William and Mary Quarterly, series 1, 12 (1903-1904), p. 180.

<sup>11</sup>Rawleigh Shearman to Martin Shearman, 6 June 1786, Lancaster County Deed

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Book 21, f. 76.

<sup>12</sup>Rawleigh Shearman to Martin Shearman, 18 May 1792, Lancaster County Deed Book 21, f. 238. Lancaster County Land Taxes, 1792-1799. H.W. Flourney, editor, Calendar of Virginia State Papers 1795-1798 (Richmond: 1890), p. 399.

<sup>13</sup>H.W. Flourney, editor, Calendar of Virginia State Papers 1808-1835 (Richmond: 1892), p. 220.

<sup>14</sup>Flourney, editor, Calendar of Virginia State Papers 1808-1835, p. 234.

<sup>15</sup>Will of Martin Shearman, proved 20 April 1814, Lancaster County Will Book 28, pp. 148-149.

<sup>16</sup>Lancaster County Land Taxes 1810-1850.

<sup>17</sup>Elizabeth Shearman to Thomas Armstrong, 18 July 1842, Lancaster County Deed Book 39, pp. 421-422. Elizabeth Shearman was administrator of Ezekial Gilbert Shearman's estate.

<sup>18</sup>Armstrong was a native of Ireland. The 1850 Census of Lancaster County, Virginia (Lancaster: Mary Ball Memorial Museum and Library, 1968). Mention of Armstrong's military service is in Flourney, editor, Calendar of Virginia State Papers 1808-1835, p. 323.

<sup>19</sup>Lancaster County Land Taxes 1830-1850.

<sup>20</sup>Marriage bond of Ann E.R. Armstrong and James W. Gresham, 17 October 1842, Lancaster County Marriage Bonds, p. 207.

<sup>21</sup>Thomas and Ann Armstrong to James W. Gresham, 8 December 1851, Lancaster County Deed Book 41, p. 273.

<sup>22</sup>Lancaster County Land Taxes 1851.

<sup>23</sup>The date and sequence of construction can be inferred from the Lancaster County Land Taxes 1850-1860. By the early 1850s, when James W. Gresham picked up payment of taxes on Pop Castle, the buildings on the site had long been valued at \$500. In 1855, the worth of buildings on the plantation increased to \$2,000, a change that represents the construction of the new dwelling. In 1857, the value of Pop Castle's buildings increased to \$2,500--probably as a result of the construction of the northeast ell.

<sup>24</sup>George Fitzhugh, "The Northern Neck of Virginia," Debow's Review 27 (September,

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1859), p. 282. Quoted in James Blaine Gouger III, "Agricultural Change in the Northern Neck of Virginia 1700-1860: An Historical Geography" (Dissertation: University of Florida, 1976), pp. 126-130.

<sup>25</sup>Richard Rush and Robert H. Woods, editors, Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1897), series 1, v. 5, p. 738.

<sup>26</sup>Rush and Woods, editors, p. 741.

<sup>27</sup>Rush and Woods, editors, pp. 737-741.

<sup>28</sup>Rush and Woods, editors, p. 42.

<sup>29</sup>Will of James W. Gresham, 11 May 1862, Lancaster County Will Book 30, pp. 10-12.

<sup>30</sup>Assignment of Dower to Ann E.R. Gresham 19 January 1863, Lancaster County Land Causes 1841-1885, pp. 276-277.

<sup>31</sup>James R. Gresham to Romulus M. Sanders, 24 November 1875, Lancaster County Deed Book 44, pp. 48-51; Gresham to Sanders, 15 May 1882, Lancaster County Deed Book 45, pp. 276-277.

<sup>32</sup>Will of Romulus W. Sanders, proved 10 May 1917, Lancaster County Will Book 30, p. 301.

<sup>33</sup>Mamie McL. Sanders to Edward T. Lemmon, 12 September 1939, Lancaster County Deed Book 73, p. 362.

<sup>34</sup>Interview with Thomas B. Denegre, Jr., and Louise R. Denegre, 24 June 1988.



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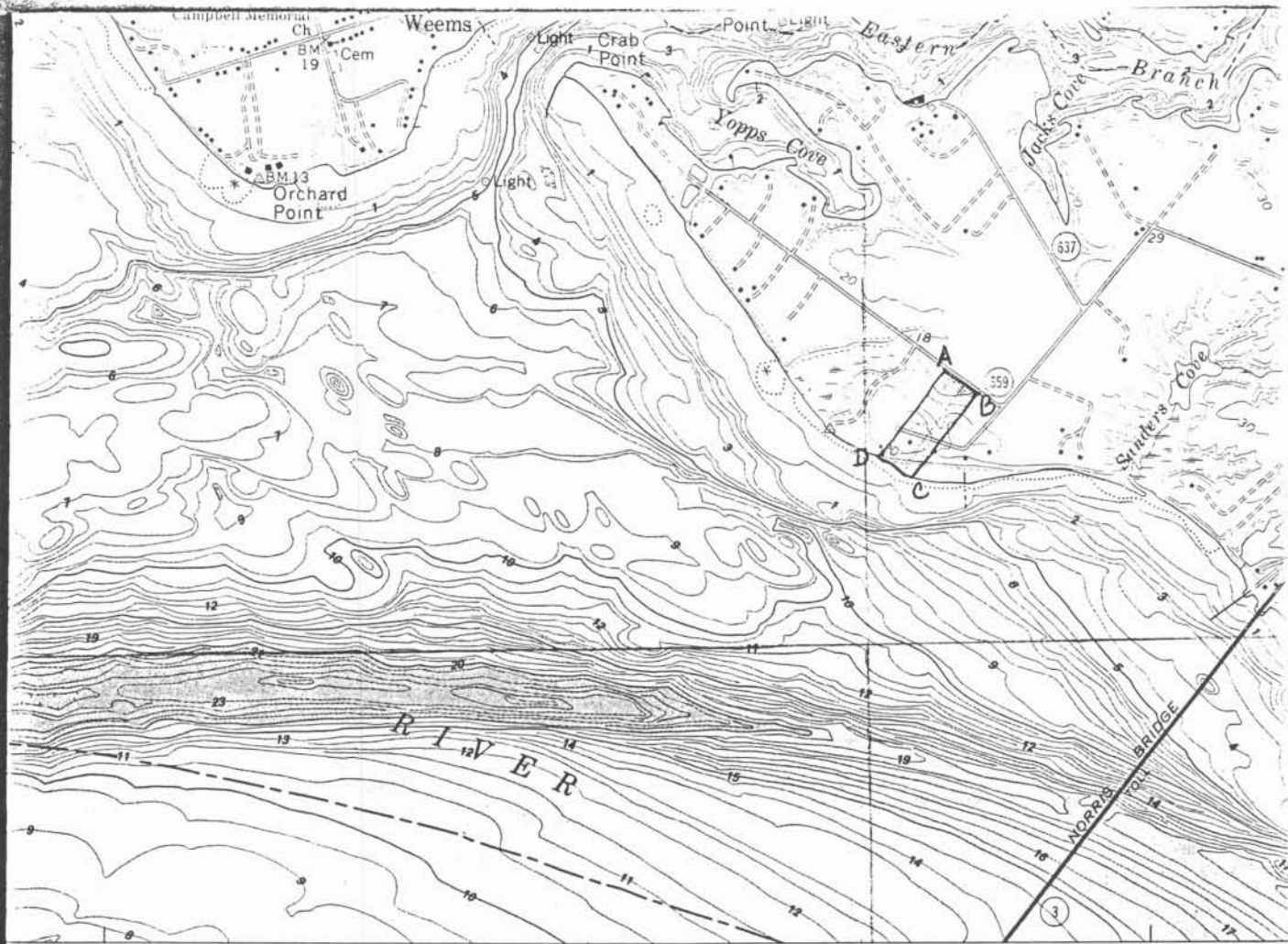
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Thomas and Ann Armstrong to James W. Gresham, 8 December 1851, Lancaster County Deed Book 41, p. 273.

Richard Rush and Robert H. Woods, editors, Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1897), series 1, v. 5, pp. 737-741.

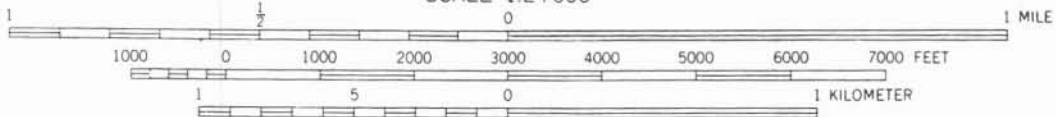
Will of James W. Gresham, 11 May 1862, Lancaster County Will Book 30, pp. 10-12.

Assignment of Dower to Ann E. R. Gresham 19 January 1863, Lancaster County Land Causes 1841-1885, pp. 276-277.



371 27'30" 372 (WILTON) 5759 III SW HARMONY VILLAGE 5 MI. GLOUCESTER 22 MI. 25'

SCALE 1:24 000



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
 DOTTED LINES REPRESENT 5 FOOT CONTOURS  
 NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929  
 BATHYMETRIC CONTOUR INTERVAL 1 METER WITH SUPPLEMENTARY  
 0.5 METER CONTOURS—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER  
 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE

BASE MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
 BATHYMETRIC SURVEY DATA COMPLIES WITH INTERNATIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC  
 ORGANIZATION (IHO) SPECIAL PUBLICATION 44 ACCURACY STANDARDS  
 AND/OR STANDARDS USED AT THE DATE OF THE SURVEY  
 FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
 NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE, ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20852  
 AND VIRGINIA DIVISION OF MINERAL RESOURCES, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA 22903  
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

POP CASTLE  
 Lancaster County, VA  
 UTM References:  
 A- 18/374290/4166740  
 B- 18/374400/4166860  
 C- 18/374170/4166580  
 D- 18/374040/4166660  
 Irvington, VA

SURVEY INDEX



SURVEY

LINE	SURVEY LINE SPACING (NAUT. MILES)
000	.02-.06
000	.02-.06
000	.01-.05