

VLR 12/6/6
NRHP 3/29/7

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Mechum River Farm
other names/site number VDHR Id # 002-1632

2. Location

street & number 1207 Burchs Creek Road not for publication N/A
city or town Charlottesville vicinity X
state Virginia code VA county Albemarle code 003
zip code 22903

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 2/14/2007
Signature of certifying official Date
Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. 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 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

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>8</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
<u>9</u>	<u>2</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions):

Cat: <u>DOMESTIC</u>	Sub: <u>Single dwelling, Secondary Structures</u>
<u>AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE</u>	<u>Animal Facility, Agricultural Outbuilding</u>
<u>FUNERARY</u>	<u>Cemetery</u>

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions):

Cat: <u>DOMESTIC</u>	Sub: <u>Single dwelling, Secondary Structures</u>
<u>AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE</u>	<u>Storage</u>
<u>FUNERARY</u>	<u>Cemetery</u>

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions):

MID-19TH CENTURY: Gothic Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions):

foundation: BRICK
roof: METAL: Tin
walls: WOOD: Weatherboard
other: _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance c. 1820-1920

Significant Dates c. 1820; c. 1850

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 21.620 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet):

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1)	<u>17</u>	<u>0700228</u>	<u>4209150</u>	3)	<u>17</u>	<u>0700482</u>	<u>4208922</u>
2)	<u>17</u>	<u>0700388</u>	<u>4208836</u>	4)	<u>17</u>	<u>0700376</u>	<u>4208717</u>

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kristie Baynard/Architectural Historian
organization Arcadia Preservation, LLC date 8/10/06
street & number PO Box 138 telephone 434.293.7772
city or town Keswick state VA zip code 22947

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Robert and Joyce Johnson
street & number 1207 Burchs Creek Road telephone N/A
city or town Charlottesville state VA zip code 22903

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. 470 et seq.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Keeper, National Register of Historic Places, 1849 "C" Street NW, Washington, DC 20240.

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**MECHUM RIVER FARM (002-1632)
Albemarle County, Virginia**

Summary Description

The main building at Mechum River Farm is an evolved Gothic Revival style dwelling, one-and-a-half stories in height, three bays wide, and set on a raised basement with a solid brick foundation. Originally constructed circa 1820, the house was stylistically updated and expanded circa 1850. The original block of the house is set on a three-course American bond foundation and the addition is on a four- to six-course American bond foundation. The house is clad with weatherboard siding, features a hipped-roof portico over the central single-leaf entry, and is capped with a side-gable roof sheathed with standing-seam metal. The façade features a large central cross-gable roof; rising above the main body of the house are two interior-end, stretcher-bond brick chimneys with corbeled caps. The east chimney features three separate flue stacks and the chimney on the west end has two separate stacks. A circa 1920 shed-roof addition on the rear elevation of the main block is set on a brick pier foundation with non-historic brick infill. A circa 1976 addition extends from the 1920 addition and terminates with a screened porch at the corner. Other features of the house include octagonal column supports on the portico, overhanging eaves, and decorative bargeboard on the gables of the main block. The house is surrounded by numerous outbuildings; a cemetery is sited to the rear on a small grassy knoll.

Site Description

Located in western Albemarle County, Virginia, Mechum River Farm is sited approximately 2.70 miles south of Rt. 250 (Ivy Road) on unpaved Burch's Creek Road. Approximately a half mile to the south of the farm is the Batesville Historic District (listed in the National Register of Historic Places). Facing southwest, the Mechum River Farm house is sited near the dirt road with access by a gravel driveway. Large trees and bushes dot the property and line the property's perimeter, shielding it from the road. Embracing just over twenty-one acres, much of the land is comprised of hay pastures set among a rolling pastoral landscape. The area immediately surrounding the house is grassy with large boxwoods lining the herringbone brick path leading from the driveway to the house. At the start of path are two brick piers with concrete coping and the path extends across the left side of the house.

Exterior

The main dwelling appears to date to circa 1820 as a one-story vernacular house, which was then stylistically updated and expanded circa 1850. Around 1850, a full-width addition was made across the southwest elevation, the roof was raised, and a center cross gable added to the façade as well as a center portico. It is not clear if the addition altered the orientation of the house to face southwest, away from the road. These additions significantly altered the building from a small vernacular dwelling to a middle-class farm house reflecting the newly popularized Gothic Revival style.

A gabled greenhouse connects the main dwelling on the southeast elevation to the single-cell summer kitchen. This one-room building is one story in height, two bays wide, and the wood-frame construction is clad with some circular sawn weatherboards. It has a side-gable, standing-seam metal roof and one exterior-end chimney. Oral history claims this structure was built around 1810 as the original dwelling. However, the building's configuration and association with the

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main dwelling as well as the use of four-panel doors suggests it is contemporary to the circa 1820 main dwelling, or built shortly thereafter, to serve as a summer kitchen.

The first story of the façade of the main dwelling contains a central entry which holds a wood-paneled non-historic door and a one-light glass storm door. The entry is illuminated with four-light over one-panel sidelights and a rectangular five-light transom. The lights of the transom are not equally sized and the door surround features flat corner blocks. Flanking the entrance are two six-over-six wood-sash windows with square-edged wood sills. The door and window surrounds consist of a fillet, half-hollow to a torus molding, a sunken fillet terminating to a small fillet. The center cross gable on the façade is pierced with a pointed-arch four-over-four wood-sash window with a three-paned lozenge. Three basement windows pierce the façade, which contain six-over-three wood-sash windows. The six-over-three window in the circa 1850 addition is an original 1820 window that was first located on the northwest basement wall of the original block. When the addition was built, the window was moved and the former window bay was filled in with brick. The center window is located directly underneath the portico. Set on a brick pier foundation, the porch sheltering the front entry has wood tongue-and-groove floorboards with octagonal columns. The porch features square balusters, a flat entablature, and scroll-sawn exposed rafter tails.

The southeast elevation of the main dwelling contains one six-over-six window on the first story and two four-over-four windows on the upper story. The basement is pierced with one six-over-three window similar to the façade and one single-leaf, original door. This door originally was a four panel door, however, the Johnsons replaced the top two panels with two lights. This doorway appears to be original corresponding to the side entry to the adjacent summer kitchen. A bulkhead originally covered this basement entrance. The southeast elevation of the circa 1920 shed addition on the rear is pierced with one six-over-six wood window with a square-edged surround. The basement to the addition contains a crawl space accessed through a small vertical-board flush door.

No openings are visible on the rear of the main block due to the circa 1920 addition. This addition is pierced with a modern bay window which holds a twenty-light fixed window flanked by six-over-six windows. In addition to the bay window, this section contains two six-over-six windows of varying sizes, one of which is located in the circa 1980 addition. The screened porch on the rear of the main block, added by the current owners, stands on a brick foundation. The northwest elevation of the main block is pierced with two six-over-six windows on the first story, two four-over-four windows on the second story, and one six-light casement window in the basement.

The one-room summer kitchen is set on a brick foundation, clad with weatherboard siding with cornerboards, and features one exterior-end reconstructed brick chimney built in a stretcher bond. The double-shouldered chimney features a corbeled cap. The side-gable, standing-seam metal roof of this structure features overhanging eaves and a boxed cornice. The main

façade is the northeast elevation, which is opposite of the main dwellings façade. The kitchen's façade holds a single-leaf entry with a four-panel wood door with a porcelain knob and a non-historic screen door covers this entry. Flanking the entry is one six-over-six wood-sash window, which was originally located in the circa 1920 addition on the main dwelling where the bay window is now located. Sheltering this elevation of the summer kitchen is a shed-roof porch supported with square wood posts. During the late twentieth century this porch was restored and a concrete floor installed. The northwest

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elevation of this small building holds one single-leaf, four-paneled wood door, which is now sheltered by the connecting greenhouse. The door features a square-edged surround and a porcelain knob. The southwest elevation is pierced with two six-over-six wood-sash windows with thin molded surrounds with thin square-edged wood sills. One six-over-six window was moved from the building's façade to the southwest elevation during the late twentieth century. The southeast elevation does not contain any openings and only features the exterior-end chimney.

The greenhouse hyphen holds a one-light sliding glass door which is flanked with a full-height fixed one-light window. The roof of the greenhouse is capped with a standing-seam metal gable roof.

Interior

The interior of the main dwelling on Mechum River Farm consists of a center passage hall with a dog-leg stair flanked by a single room on either side. The rear of the passage leads to the circa 1920 addition, which contains a kitchen, bathroom, and utility room. The second floor contains two bedrooms, one on either side of the stair as well as the addition of a non-historic bathroom, linen closet, and a bedroom closet. Underneath the first floor staircase is a straight-flight stair to the basement, which consists of two rooms, currently a living room and an office. The southeast basement room (living room) has an exterior door on the southeast wall that leads to the greenhouse and summer kitchen. The summer kitchen was converted circa 1980 into a single bedroom.

The original configuration of the main house, which was constructed around 1820, most likely consisted of a hall-parlor plan. It is unclear if there was a loft or livable attic space in this original structure. There is no visible evidence of a stair in the circa 1820 section of the house. Around 1850 the roof was raised and a center passage with a new stair and a parlor on the northwest side were added.

The front entry hall contains circa 1920 floorboards of one-and-a-half-inch oak floorboards and wallpapered plaster walls and a painted plaster ceiling. The original plaster throughout the entire house was removed and replaced circa 1976. The front door surround is five inches wide and consists of a fillet, cyma recta, a fascia terminating with an astragal and the door jambs terminate to splayed plinth blocks. At the rear of the hall is the original exterior doorway. It features a similar molding profile on both the hall side and exterior as the front door. The baseboard in the hall rises nine-and-a-half inches in height and has a quarter-round shoe molding. The base molding consists of a quirked ovolo, a cant, and a sunken fillet separating two small fillets. The dog leg open-stringer stair features a turned newel post on a square plinth block and a rounded hand rail. The stair also features square balusters and an original vertical-paneled stringer wall. To the rear of the hall is a closet added circa 1980 with a six-panel wood door and the molding profile consists of a fillet, scotia, several recessed fascias, terminating to a torus molding.

A straight-flight stair underneath the dog-leg stair leads to the basement. Access to this stair is through a single-leaf two-panel wood door with a metal vent in a bottom panel. This door is not original, however, it is similar to other circa 1850 doors in the house detailed with graining. It has no door surround except for a thin astragal molding. The rear of the hall has a doorway that leads to the rear addition. It is unknown when the original exterior door was removed.

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The southeast room in the main block is currently used as a bedroom. It contains circa 1920 flooring and painted plaster walls and ceiling. The southeast wall features a projecting chimney breast with a brick hearth and brick surround for the fireplace. All fireplaces throughout the house were rebuilt circa 1976. A closet stands on the south side of the chimney breast and contains a four-panel wood door with a lock box and a porcelain knob.¹ Prior to renovation in 1976, this room originally held a door on the rear northeast wall. It is unknown if this door served as an original exterior door or was put in at a later date to give passage to the rear addition. This space has since been in-filled and no sign of a doorway remains. The six-and-a-half-inch non-historic baseboard does not have a base molding and features a quarter-round shoe molding. This same baseboard design is located in the closet. The door and window trim is similar to the door casing in the front hall. The modest mantle shelf to the fireplace consists of a canted bed molding and a large flat frieze. The mantle is embellished with simple flat pilasters with a canted capital and flat plinth blocks. Two non-historic closets are located on the northwest wall and hold three-panel wood doors. The molding profile is similar to the trim of the non-historic closet in the hall.

Northwest of the hall is the circa 1850 addition, which contains the parlor. The original random width floorboards are five-and-a-half- to six-inches wide and are scored throughout with termite damage, suggesting the boards are re-used from an earlier structure. The original baseboard is similar to the hall, however, the fascia board still features its original painted marbling and it rises ten inches in height, compared to the previously described nine-and-a-half inches. The protruding chimney breast contains a rebuilt fireplace with the original brick hearth and mantle. The mantle shelf, bed molding, and flat frieze is similar to the circa 1820 room. However, the parlor mantle features three-sided pilasters with three-sided capitals.

The rear circa 1920 addition originally consisted of a bedroom and a storage room with an exterior door on the northwest wall. In 1976, the bedroom was converted into a kitchen and the storage room into a bathroom. At this time, a utility room was added onto the northwest side of the rear addition. In 1976, a screened porch was added onto the side of the utility room. The original exterior door in the 1920 addition was moved at this time to the doorway accessing the screened porch from the utility room.

The plaster walls in the 1920 section are papered in the hall and the floorboards are similar to the front hall. The baseboard throughout the circa 1920 section are seven-and-a-half inches in height with a flat fascia board and a square shoe molding. The kitchen in this addition has five-inch floorboards and painted plaster walls and ceiling. The window casing has a molding profile of a fillet, recessed fillet, cyma recta, terminating with a small fillet. The doorway in the kitchen features a

molding profile similar to the original circa 1850 trim. The bathroom in the rear section has papered plaster walls, a painted plaster ceiling, carpeted flooring, and a seven-inch baseboard with no shoe molding and no base molding. The bathroom contains a four-panel wood door. The adjacent utility room has three-and-a-quarter inch floorboards and a seven-and-a-half inch baseboard with a shoe molding.

Continuing to the second floor, the stair stringer is nine-and-three-quarter inches in height and features a slightly similar base molding as the front hall baseboard, a quirked ovolo to a splayed molding. The baseboard on the second floor landing

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lacks the ovolo and consists of a small splayed molding to the fascia board. The window trim is similar to the circa 1850 trim. The second floor hall is wall papered and the random width floorboards range from four-and-a-half to seven inches wide. These floorboards extend into the southeast bedroom. Each bedroom has a protruding chimney breast and brick hearths to the fireplaces. The mantles in each of the two bedrooms are similar to the one exhibited in the circa 1820 room on the first floor. The circa 1850 window surrounds are also similar to the living room. The baseboard in the southeast bedroom contains a baseboard that is seven-and-one-quarter inches in height with a very slight canted base molding and rounded shoe molding. The size of the northwest bedroom was altered circa 1976 by adding a bathroom and a linen closet between the bedroom and the stair hall. The linen closet holds a four-panel grained door. The door surrounds to both the linen closet and the bathroom are similar to the non-historic closets on the first floor. The floorboards in the northwest bedroom, similar to the living room, are scored with termite marks. The door to the northwest bedroom contains a four-panel wood door with the original circa 1850 surround. The closet addition in the northwest bedroom on the southeast wall was put in circa 1976. This closet holds a vertical board door with a similar surround as the non-historic closets on the first floor.

The full-height basement contains one room under the circa 1820 section with a doorway on the northwest wall leading to the circa 1850 addition with a similar door surround as the front hall. The door leading to the addition is a plain raised four-panel wood door with no applied moldings featuring hand planing on the panels. The northwest brick wall separating the two rooms is approximately one foot wide. Underneath the straight-flight partially closed stringer stair is a closet with a vertical-board door with a lock box and porcelain knob. The bottom three steps feature a balustrade with a non-historic square newel post. The ceiling joists in the circa 1820 block are reciprocating and adz markings are visible. Flanking both sides of the fireplace in this section is a nine-and-a-half-inch-wide ceiling beam with adz marks, whereas the remaining ceiling joists are approximately four inches wide. The fireplace in the circa 1820 block features a slate hearth and the bed molding supporting the mantle shelf is comprised of a fillet, cyma reversa, fillet, ovolo, and a fillet. Around the fireplace opening, the mantle features a molding piece applied with wire nails. The doorway to the greenhouse on the southeast wall features historic trim that has been modified with non-historic materials and holds a historic two-light over two-panel door.² The basement has a non-historic brick floor in each of the two rooms. The circa 1850 section was built as a cold storage room. It has a protruding chimney breast with no fireplace and the ceiling joists are circular sawn and two-and-a-half inches wide. Evidence remains of an in-filled window on the center wall between the two rooms. This window was moved to the façade of the addition to balance the symmetry of the basement windows. This window provides further evidence of two periods of construction, circa 1820 and circa 1850.

The greenhouse between the main dwelling and the summer kitchen has a brick floor and brick steps leading to the kitchen entry. The four raised-panel door has a square-edged surround six inches wide. The single room of the summer kitchen measures fifteen feet by fourteen feet eight inches. A new closet was added during the late twentieth century and features a surround similar to the non-historic closets in the main block. The closet contains a six-panel wood door. The non-historic plain baseboard is six-and-three-quarter inches in height. The northeast wall holds the original four-panel wood door to the exterior. The fireplace was rebuilt and the mantle is similar to the one in the circa 1820 first floor room in the main dwelling.

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Secondary Resources

Adjacent to the main dwelling to the southeast is a circa 1820 one-room summer kitchen. A small circa 1850 barn and a circa 1900 shed are sited near the road and a wood shed is located to the north corner of the house. Immediately to the rear of the dwelling is a circa 1900 Delco shed, a circa 1820 smokehouse, and a circa 1850 chicken coop. Set away from the house to the east is a circa 1850 privy and a large circa 1850 shed stands to the southeast. A circa 1977 in-ground pool is located adjacent to the shed on the southeast side.

Barn – 1850, contributing

This small one-story wood-frame barn stands on a stone pier foundation and is clad with vertical-board siding. It is capped with a front-gable, standing-seam metal roof with exposed rafters. The façade contains a single-leaf vertical-board door and the shed-roof wings on each side elevation are open on the front. The wings feature some log post supports. A shed-roof addition is located across the rear elevation of the front-gable block. The initials CWB are inscribed on one of the walls, presumably for Charles W. Burch, and WAB is inscribed on the inside of the door, for his son, Warren A. Burch.

Shed – c. 1900, contributing

Constructed in wood frame, this circa 1900 one-story shed is clad with vertical-board siding and is capped with a front-gable, asphalt-shingle roof. It features exposed rafters and a single-leaf vertical-board door.

Wood shed – 1930, non-contributing

The circa 1930 one-story wood shed sits on a wood post foundation, has one open bay, and is covered with a front-gable roof sheathed with standing-seam metal. It is clad with vertical-board siding and it uses wire nails and re-used boards.

Delco shed – circa 1900, contributing

Set on a poured concrete foundation, the circa 1900 Delco shed was built to hold the Delco generator that ran electrical power to the house. It is clad with weatherboard siding and the shed roof is covered with standing-seam metal. The front holds a single-leaf vertical-board door with a porcelain knob. The roof features exposed rafters and both side elevations contain a six-light wood single-sash window.

Smokehouse – 1820, contributing

This large circa 1820 one-story smokehouse rests on a brick pier foundation and is clad with board-and-batten siding. The front-gable roof is sheathed with corrugated-sheet metal and features exposed rafters. The façade holds a single-leaf vertical-board door. The interior exhibits some mortise-and-tenon joinery and no ridge board.

Chicken coop – 1850, contributing

The circa 1850 one-story wood-frame chicken coop sits on a brick pier foundation and is clad with weatherboard siding with cornerboards. A single-leaf, vertical-board door pierces the side elevation. The standing-seam metal roof features exposed rafters.

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Cemetery, contributing

The Burch family cemetery is located on a rise above the house to the northeast. It contains one marker for both Ella B. Burch (b. September 24, 1841, d. April 19, 1918) and R.H. Burch (b. November 7, 1840, d. January 20, 1907). A second marker is for both Charles W. Burch (b. June 2, 1884, d. December 2, 1953) and his wife, Maizy M. Burch (b. April 22, 1885, d. November 16, 1959). There are no other markers, however, Burch family descendents claim there are several unmarked graves of Burch family members.

Privy – 1850, contributing

The circa 1850 one-story wood-frame privy stands on a deteriorated brick foundation and the structure is clad with vertical-board siding. It holds a vertical-board single-leaf door and the shed roof is sheathed with standing-seam metal.

Shed – 1850, contributing

This one-story circa 1850 shed stands on a brick pier foundation, is clad with board-and-batten siding and contains single-leaf vertical-board doors on both the front and rear elevation. The side-gable roof with exposed rafters is covered with asphalt shingles.

In-ground concrete pool – 1977, non-contributing site

¹ Each of the original doors to the house all have the original lock boxes, however, several of the knobs have been replaced.

² The basement door that leads to the greenhouse is an original circa 1820 four-panel door. The top two panels were removed and replaced with two lights. The panels that were removed are in storage with the house.

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Albemarle County, Virginia**

Statement of Significance

Mechum River Farm is an excellent example of an early nineteenth-century vernacular hall-parlor dwelling stylistically updated and expanded during the mid-nineteenth century to a Gothic Revival-style house. The original modest two-room house was enlarged to create a more symmetrical central passage plan. Begun as a one-story side-gable dwelling, the main house was expanded in the mid-nineteenth century to reflect the fashionable architectural styles gaining popularity throughout the nation. This was done by raising the roof adding two bedrooms on the second floor, and constructing a parlor and a central stair on the first floor. These alterations were most likely done by John C. Burch around 1850, a professional brick mason. Experienced in the building trades, Burch was most likely aware of the current stylistic trends illustrated in pattern books by Alexander Jackson Davis and Andrew Jackson Downing, who touted the rural form of the Gothic Revival style. The resulting dwelling located in western Albemarle County is a quintessential example both in form, material, and setting of the Gothic Revival style.

Criteria Statement

Mechum River Farm is significant at the local level for architecture with a period of significance from its original construction (c. 1820) until its last historic alterations (c. 1920). Altered circa 1850 from a small vernacular dwelling to a middle-class farm house reflecting the newly popularized Gothic Revival style, the house provides evidence of the pervasive influence of architectural pattern books even in rural western Albemarle County and illustrates how those pattern books were used by modest property owners to stylistically update their dwellings.

Historical Background

The main house appears to have been originally constructed circa 1820, but significantly expanded and stylistically updated circa 1850. A summer kitchen is associated with the main house and it appears to date to the same period as the original dwelling. Early nineteenth century deeds associated with this property have not been identified, however, it is clear that the property was owned by John C. Burch at the time of his death in 1874. Unfortunately, neither the will nor any other written records from the first half of the nineteenth century provides a clear understanding of the property's original ownership. It has been assumed by Burch family descendents that John Burch received the farm from his father, William Burch, however, no known records exist to confirm this assumption. Although it is not certain, there is one possible deed to which the property may belong dated December 11, 1851. This deed is from Mary Rop and Robert Kent/Kerr to John Burch for 128 acres lying on Mechum River bounded by lands of Samuel O. Moon and the estate of Joseph Mahon.¹ This deed would correspond to the stylistic updates that took place on the main house circa 1850.

Regardless of who the original builder was of Mechum River Farm, it is the mid-nineteenth century stylistic updates by John Burch that are most significant to Albemarle County's architectural evolution. The property remained in the Burch family for approximately 175 years until 1976 when it was purchased by Robert and Joyce Johnson, the current owners.²

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The Burch family in Virginia dates at least as far back as 1763 when Thomas Burch and his wife, Ann, purchased property in Albemarle County.³ John C. Burch, great grandson to Thomas and Ann Burch, was born on August 20, 1810 to William

and Mary Burton-Burch. On January 6, 1840 John Burch married Lucinda E. Gay (b. 1821) and they eventually had three children, Richard H. (b. 1840), Veturia Ann (b. 1844-1862), and Georginia (b. 1845). According to the Federal Census in 1860, John Burch is listed as a brick mason and resides at Mechum River Farm with his wife, son, and oldest daughter.⁴

In 1865, the eldest son, Richard Burch, married Ella M. Hight (1841-1918) and raised his family on Mechum River Farm, while living with his parents. Richard and Ella eventually had six children, one of which did not survive. The five children included Lucian (b. 1872), James Madison (b. 1874), John T. (b. 1877), Geales Elizabeth (b. 1880), and Charles W. (1884). John Burch died on November 9, 1874 at the age of sixty-four and Lucinda Burch remained on the farm with her son's family until her death in 1886 at the age of sixty-five. According to John Burch's will, the farm was to remain with his wife, Lucinda, until her death and then pass on to his grandchildren (the children of Richard Burch).⁵

By 1900, two sons, James M. and John T., had moved from home leaving Lucian and Charles working on the family farm. Although the Federal Census lists Richard Burch as a farmer, family history claims that he was employed, like his father, as a brick mason. Soon after 1900, Lucian Burch moved away from home and started a family at nearby Midway Farm (VDHR file # 002-1192). This left Charles Burch as the only remaining son of Richard's to remain on Mechum River Farm. Two years following his father's death in 1907, Charles Burch married Maizy Mae Bunch and began his family life on Mechum River Farm. By 1918, Charles Burch had acquired each of his sibling's shares of the farm according to the county land records. Ella Burch continued to live with her son and his family until her death in 1918 at the age of seventy-six.⁶

Charles W. and Maizy Burch had five children, Newman R. (b. 1910), Charles W. (b.1914), Maizy Lavonia (b. 1916), Alice Lorene (b. 1918), and Warren A. (b.1922). Charles and Maizy Burch remained on Mechum River Farm until their deaths in 1953 and 1959 respectively and the farm was inherited by Charles and Maizy's children. Lavonia, given life rights to the farm, resided there for the remainder of her life until 1971.⁷ During much of Lavonia Burch's residence, Harold Dollins, the farm overseer, also resided on the farm. He remained on the farm following her death until it was sold in 1976. At that time, the property was owned by the two remaining grandsons of Richard and Ella Burch, Charles W. and Warren A. Burch, as well as a great grandson, Newman Robert Burch.⁸ The purchase by Robert and Joyce Johnson ended the approximately 175 years of Burch family ownership of Mechum River Farm.

The earliest values of Mechum River Farm are located in the 1860 Federal Census in the listing for John Burch and his family. At this time, the real estate value for Burch was \$3,250 and his personal property was valued at \$6,545. Compared to others in the surrounding area, these amounts suggest that the Burch family maintained a solid middle-class standing.⁹ Numerous rural residents throughout the district, as well as the county, did not own property. For those who did, the values within the district of St. Anne's Parish ranged from \$400 to \$75,000 with most farmers listed with \$2,000 or less in valued real estate.¹⁰ Out of 935 farms within the county, the Agricultural Federal Census for Albemarle County lists 576 farms (sixty-one percent) that comprised between one hundred and five hundred acres. Totalling 142 acres in 1860, Mechum River Farm was an average farm size in Albemarle County.¹¹

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According to the 1872 land records for John Burch, the buildings on Mechum River Farm amounted to \$550 and the 142 acres at fifteen dollars per acre gave him a total land and building value of \$2,130.¹² According to the agricultural schedules of the non-population census of 1880, Richard Burch tilled seventy-five acres and had sixty-five acres of woodland. His farm was valued at two thousand dollars, which is very near the 1872 land value previously mentioned. Burch owned fifty dollars worth of farm implements, had \$270 worth of livestock, paid \$125 for labor in 1879, and sold three hundred dollars worth of farm products in 1879. He farmed fifteen acres of Indian corn, two acres of rye, fifteen acres of wheat, one acre of Irish potatoes, one acre of sweet potatoes, and two acres of apple trees.¹³ Again, evidence suggests he was a solid middle-class farmer specializing in a mixed use agricultural system.

By 1900, the value of land throughout Albemarle County dropped dramatically to over six dollars per acre. Additionally, Richard Burch's building value dropped fifty dollars giving him a total land and building value of \$1,378.¹⁴ The value of the Mechum River Farm buildings remained steady at \$500 until 1922 when they increased in value to \$800 due to changes made by Charles W. and Maizy Burch.¹⁵ In 1917, Charles W. and Maizy Burch acquired full ownership of Mechum River Farm. Charles Burch had previously been given nine adjoining acres from his oldest brother thereby making the family farm a total of 151 acres at the time of his ownership. The increase in value by three hundred dollars in 1922 suggests this is the date the rear addition was constructed. This was most likely the same time that the flooring was changed throughout the house. Additionally, one or more outbuildings may have been constructed at this time. The only remaining major changes to the house occurred in the last quarter of the twentieth century under the ownership of the Johnsons. These changes included adding running water, electricity, bathrooms, kitchen appliances, and closets.

Gothic Revival Style and Mechum River Farm

Alexander Jackson Davis, one of America's first professional architects, was the first to develop the Gothic Revival style in the United States. Davis' Gothic designs and theories were propagated through his book *Rural Residences*, published in 1837. This was the first house plan book with complete three-dimensional views and floor plans published in the country. Andrew Jackson Downing extended on Davis' work and published his first pattern book in 1842 entitled *Cottage Residences* and a second in 1850 called *The Architecture of Country Houses*. The buildings, designed by both Davis and Downing as exhibited in their pattern books, popularized the Gothic Revival style throughout the country, particularly rural America.

In *Cottage Residences*, Downing explains that "cultivated minds" in which "taste and imagination are active" desire and need objects of a different kind of beauty than those reflecting classical reason and order. He states picturesque styles would give a much more intense and enduring pleasure than those of the earlier periods.¹⁶ He also criticizes the use of the Greek-style temple for residential uses as inappropriate and not sensible.

Brooding and romantic, the Gothic Revival style was a picturesque mode with vaulted ceilings, battlements, lancet-arched windows, and tracery, all suggesting the mysterious architectural vocabulary of the medieval past. Promoted by both Davis and Downing separately in their written works, the Gothic Revival style was deemed to be suitable only for the rural landscape because of its picturesque nature. Additionally, Downing deemed that the Gothic Revival style should only be applied to small cottage dwellings instead of towering Cathedral-like houses.

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Albemarle County, Virginia**

Most farm houses within Albemarle County, Virginia that illustrate the Gothic Revival style characteristically are an embellishment of the vernacular I-house form. The vernacular interpretations of the style as applied to various building types, including I-houses, are identified by steeply pitched roofs, decorative bargeboard, and one-story porches with flattened Gothic arches. Within the context of Albemarle County, the Gothic Revival style is typically and singularly illustrated with a center cross gable, varied in roof pitch. Less commonly used are other period details such as pointed openings and bargeboard detailing.

Interestingly, Downing recognized the popularity and efficiency of I-houses and adapted the Gothic Revival style to suit this house type. The farm house plan in *Cottage Residences* is an I-house, three bays wide with a central entry. The Gothic Revival details on Downing's farm house include a center cross gable, a veranda sheltering the first story, and bargeboard on each of the gables.

Mechum River Farm is quite similar to the farm house example in *Cottage Residences* except that it is not an I-house but rather a one-and-a-half story cottage. I-houses are ubiquitous throughout the rural landscape of Albemarle County as well as the whole of Virginia. Significantly, Mechum River Farm stands as a modest, but uncommon, house type as a Gothic Revival farm cottage versus the more common vernacular Virginian I-house. While drawing on Downing's cottage ideal, Mechum River Farm is an architectural rarity in Albemarle County, while the use of the academic version of the style would be expected due to the proximity of University of Virginia.

Built around 1820 as a hall-parlor house, Mechum River Farm was expanded circa 1850 into a contemporary Gothic Revival-style cottage as prescribed by the popular works of Downing and Davis. This house followed the theories set by Downing and Davis as it was a small cottage set amidst a picturesque rolling landscape surrounded by fields, pastures, and traversed by a river. Similarly to Downing's farm house in *Cottage Residences*, Mechum River Farm is three-bays on the façade with a central entry sheltered by a portico. Typifying the verticality of the Gothic Revival style, Mechum River Farm uses a central cross gable pierced with a pointed-arch window as well as multiple-stack chimneys. This center cross gable as well as the side gables are emphasized with decorative bargeboard, a common element of the Gothic Revival style.

Another important and quite unusual detail on Mechum River Farm is the use of octagonal columns to support the portico. Downing addressed veranda supports in his books in which he strongly favored the use of posts versus columns. In keeping with his basic theory that classicism was not appropriate in America's countryside, round columns of any kind should not be used. Posts, commonly chamfered, were Downing's favored porch element. However, in his later work, *The Architecture of Country Houses*, Downing introduced a much more picturesque, while still un-classical, element; the octagonal column.¹⁷ According to detailed surveys throughout Albemarle County as well as an architectural study of the county entitled *The Architecture of Jefferson Country*, only one other dwelling in the county survives using octagonal columns.¹⁸

With few Gothic Revival-style farm cottages in Albemarle County, Mechum River Farm is an important and rare example of the style in the area. For example, approximately a half mile to the south of the property is the Batesville Historic District; a small village dating to the early nineteenth century through to the last half of the twentieth century. Of the forty-

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four total buildings within the district's boundaries none are embellished in the Gothic Revival style. Several were built or expanded during the mid-nineteenth century, one residence and two churches, each illustrating the highly popularized Greek Revival style.

Mechum River Farm is significant for its illustration of the expansive influence of patterns books by architects such as A.J. Davis and A.J. Downing. It is not known whether John Burch had such books available to him in the redesign of his house, however, because he was a mason he was familiar with current trends out of which these books became popular. This farm house clearly illustrates many of the theories represented in Downing's books, such as the need for efficient and modest farm houses. Because Downing was familiar with a farmer's financial abilities he did not suggest elaborate houses. He made clear the importance of stylistic modesty with the use of steeply pitched gables, open verandas, and bargeboard detailing to create a picturesque country dwelling. Burch applied these simple and efficient elements to his dwelling in combination with the unusual octagonal columns. Downing rarely illustrated octagonal columns in his works considering them to be a more affluent and less economical choice than square posts. This combination of affluence and modesty is quite an unusual find among vernacular farm houses throughout Albemarle County.

¹ Albemarle County Land Records, December 11, 1852, Deed book 50 Folio 202.

² Albemarle County Land Records, January 22, 1997, Deed book 1612 Folio 202.

³ Edgar Woods, *Albemarle County in Virginia* (Charlottesville: Michie Company, 1901), p. 155.

⁴ Seventh-Tenth United States Census Schedules, 1850-1880: Virginia. United States Bureau of the Census. (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1988), microfilm.

⁵ Albemarle County Land Records, will of John Burch recorded on February 2, 1875, Will book 29 Folio 59.

⁶ Much of the Burch family history was given by Patrick Smith, great grandson to Charles W. and Maizy Burch.

⁷ It was Maizy Burch's will to give Lavonia Burch, her only daughter, life rights to the family farm, after having been widowed twice.

⁸ Newman Robert Burch, Sr. died in 1972 leaving his son, Newman Robert Burch, Jr. as heir to his share of the farm. Newman R. Burch, Jr. pressured Warren and Charles to buy his share of the property, however, the two brothers did not have the funds to do so. It was then agreed upon by each party to sell the property to Robert and Joyce Johnson in 1976.

⁹ Seventh-Tenth United States Census Schedules, 1850-1880: Virginia. United States Bureau of the Census. (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1988), microfilm.

¹⁰ The amount of \$75,000 was listed for William Garth one of the county's wealthiest citizens just prior to the Civil War. Properties in St. Ann's Parish that were listed more than \$10,000 was not common.

¹¹ Report on the Social, Agricultural, and Manufacturing Census, Record Group 287, National Archives at College Park, Department of the Interior, Census Office, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1840-1870 and 1870-1900).

¹² Albemarle County Land Records, Land Book 1872.

¹³ Tenth United States Census Non-Population Schedules, 1880: Virginia. United States Bureau of the Census. (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1988), microfilm. Copy of microfilm at Special Collections -- Small Library, University of Virginia.

¹⁴ Albemarle County Land Records, Land Book 1900.

¹⁵ Albemarle County Land Records, Land Book 1900-1922.

¹⁶ Andrew Jackson Downing, *Victorian Cottage Residences* (1842 Reprint, New York: Dover Publications, 1981), p. 20.

¹⁷ Andrew Jackson Downing, *Architecture of Country Houses* (1850 Reprint, New York: Dover Publications, 1969), p. 310.

¹⁸ The searchable database developed by Ed Lay lists Morrisena (vdhr # 002-0132) and Mechum River Farm as the only surviving examples with octagonal column supports.

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**MECHUM RIVER FARM (002-1632)
Albemarle County, Virginia**

Additional UTM Coordinates

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
5)	<u>17</u>	<u>0700204</u>	<u>4208755</u>	6)	<u>17</u>	<u>0700136</u>	<u>4208692</u>
7)	<u>17</u>	<u>0700108</u>	<u>4209055</u>				

Verbal Boundary Description

The property at 1207 Burchs Creek Road in Albemarle County, Virginia, known as Mechum River Farm, is identified as Parcel 29A as noted on Tax Map 71 found in the Albemarle County Courthouse and online under real estate assessment records at <http://albemarlevapropertymax.governmaxa.com>.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property consists of 21.620 acres and includes the entire parcel associated with Mechum River Farm. The 21.620 acres are all that remains associated with the main dwelling, which is the original structure on the property. It includes the main house, one barn, four sheds, one smokehouse, one chicken coop, cemetery, one privy, and an in-ground swimming pool that have been historically associated with Mechum River Farm since its construction circa 1820.

Photographs

Mechum River Farm (002-1632); Albemarle County, VA

Photographer: Arcadia Preservation

Date: 6/2006

Location of Negatives: Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR)

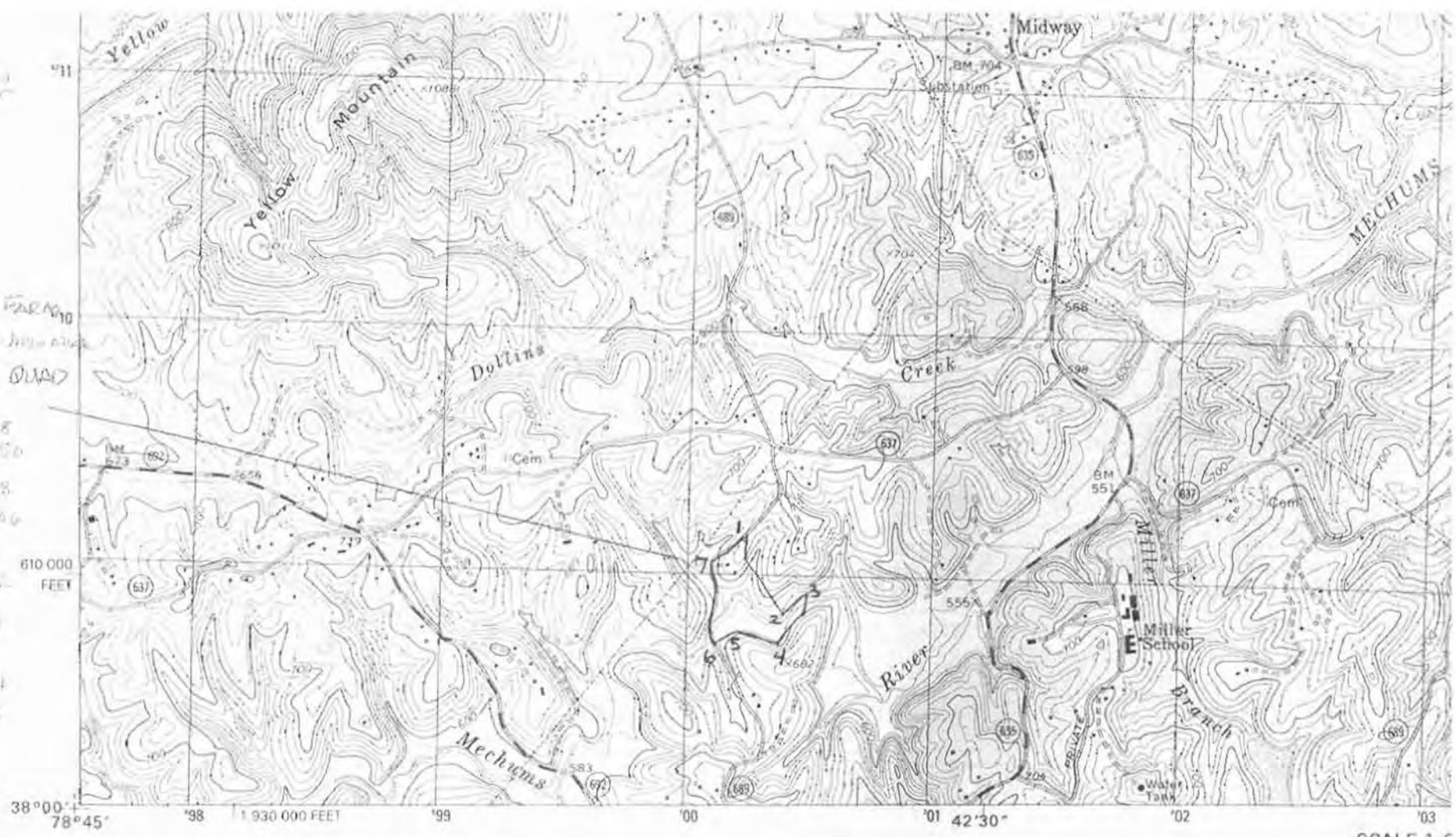
Negative # 23034

- Photo 1:** Exterior main house, SW elevation
- Photo 2:** Exterior main house, east corner looking west
- Photo 3:** Interior first floor, center hall, looking NE
- Photo 4:** Interior first floor, south bedroom, looking east
- Photo 5:** Interior first floor, looking NW
- Photo 6:** Interior basement, south room, looking south
- Photo 7:** Barn/Shed, SE elevation
- Photo 8:** Delco shed and Smokehouse, west corner
- Photo 9:** Chicken coop
- Photo 10:** Cemetery, view looking NW
- Photo 11:** Privy, pool, and shed, view looking SE

17A# 202 1622

MECHUM RIVER FARM
ALBERMARLE Co, VIRGINIA
CROZET, VA QUAD

- 1) 17 0700228
412 87150
- 2) 0700228
412 87156
- 3) 0700472
412 87122
- 4) 0700476
412 87117
- 5) 0700204
412 87255
- 6) 0700436
412 87692
- 7) 0700184
412 87055



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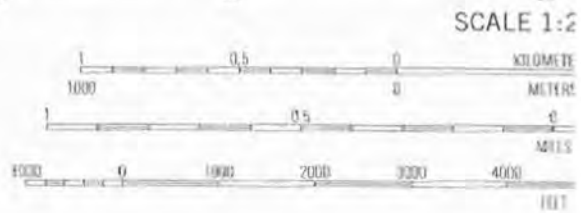
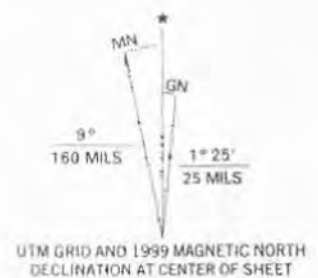
Topography compiled 1972. Planimetry derived from imagery taken 1984 and other sources. Photoinspected using imagery dated 1997; no major culture or drainage changes observed. Survey control current as of 1973. Boundaries revised 1999

North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27). Projection and 10 000-foot ticks: Virginia coordinate system, south zone (Lambert conformal conic)
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 17

North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

Information shown in purple may not meet USGS content standards and may conflict with previously mapped contours



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NATIONAL GEODETIC VERT
TO CONVERT FROM FEET TO MET



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