

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Virginia
COUNTY: Mathews
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE FEB 12 1974

1. NAME

COMMON:
Hesse

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: **E of Cobbs Creek off Va. 631**
.8 miles East of Route 631, .4 miles North of intersection with Route 98

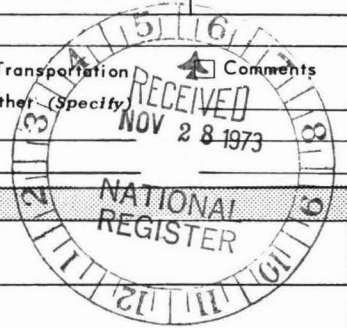
CITY OR TOWN: **Cobbs Creek**
Blakes vicinity

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
First (Thomas N. Downing)

STATE Virginia	CODE 51	COUNTY: Mathews	CODE 115
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)



4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Mr. & Mrs. Frederick B. Maxwell

STREET AND NUMBER:
Hesse

CITY OR TOWN: **Cobbs Creek**

STATE: **Virginia** CODE: **51**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Mathews County Court House

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: **Mathews**

STATE: **Virginia** CODE: **51**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory

DATE OF SURVEY: **1959** Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington**

STATE: **D. C.** CODE: **11**

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7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

I. General Statement:

A. Architectural character: Hesse is a single-pile Georgian plantation house. At one time there were flanking dependencies to the north and south. The southern dependency has been rebuilt, and a breezeway connecting it to the house has been enclosed. A late nineteenth and early twentieth century large frame ell projected from the west side of the house, but it has since been removed.

B. Archaeological character: The outlines of the foundations of an earlier house of about the same dimensions of the present one have been discovered immediately east of the house. These remains have given rise to the popular myth that Hesse was once a double-pile structure, and that a fire, mentioned in 1798, destroyed the east section. This conclusion is not justified, however, as the brickwork indicates that this was an earlier, separate house. The outlines of the north flanking outbuilding may be traced at the end of the present house.

C. Condition of the fabric: Hesse appears to be structurally sound, but is in need of minor repairs and upkeep.

II. Description of the Exterior:

A. Overall dimensions: The five-bay, two-story house is sixty feet long and thirty-two feet wide. The modern five-bay flanking south wing was built in 1952.

B. Foundations: Brick laid in English bond.

C. Wall construction: The brick walls are laid in English bond below the beveled water table, and Flemish bond above. The east side, toward the Piankatank River, shows weathering.

D. Porches: The present east porch covers the center three bays, and has a hipped roof supported by four piers. Old photographs show a smaller one-bay east porch with a gable roof and simple columns on the house about 1900. Abberations in the water table on the west side indicate that there may have been a porch there originally. The water table dips north of the door, but resumes its original level immediately south of the door. There is an indentation in the brick below the water table on either side of the door. The south indentation is four courses lower than the north one. This suggests that at one time there may have been a flight of steps ascending from the south to the door.

E. Chimneys: An interior chimney with a brick stack and a corbelled cap is at each end of the house.

F. Openings:

1. Doorways and doors: Above the east doorway is a finely carved cherubic face in Portland stone. The flat arch with keystone was incised and filled in with cement in the nineteenth century. The door frame has been replaced and has a bead. A rectangular transom is above the six-raised-panel door. The west door has architrave trim with an incised arch similar to that above the east door. The rough stone where a carved head was broken off remains above the arch.

2. Windows: The windows have architrave trim. The flat arches above them have been incised and filled with cement, which has fallen away in some cases baring the old brick jack arch. The east window sash was replaced with one-over-one sash in the twentieth century. The west windows retain nine-over-nine sash. Segmental arches cover the basement

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windows.

G. Roof: The gable roof is covered with asbestos shingle. A modillion cornice ornaments the eaves.

III. Description of the Interior:

A. Floor plan:

1. Basement: Two large rooms are in the basement. A large round arch at the north end of the north room is the remnant of a vaulted wine cellar, probably constructed soon after the house was completed.

2. Upper floors: Hesse employs the traditional, vernacular single-pile plan expressed in a central passage flanked by a room on either side. The modern additions are entered from the south room.

B. Stairway: The three-run stair ascending in the passage features a square newel with a molded cap, a molded rail, provincial turned balusters, brackets, and a paneled spandrel with three large horizontal raised panels.

C. Flooring: Tongue and groove boards with blind nails.

D. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster.

E. Doorways and doors: Architrave trim surrounds the mid-nineteenth century four-panel doors.

F. Trim:

1. North Room: The paneling is more elaborate in this room than in the others. The north wall is fully paneled with a large rectangular panel over the mantel, framed by two fluted Doric pilasters, flanked by two narrow vertical panels. On either side of this ensemble is a door (mid-nineteenth century) leading to two narrow chimney closets. Above each door is a horizontal rectangular panel. Another narrow vertical panel fills the space between each door and the side wall, and completes the north wall. The remaining walls feature wainscoting and chair rail. Paneled interior shutters fit into the window reveals, and window seats are below each window. A molded cornice surrounds the room.

2. South Room: The south room features a chair rail, paneled interior shutters fitting into reveals, windows, and two horizontal panels under each window. The molded cornice employs a pierced fascia. A picture molding is also present.

3. Central passage: The passage features paneled wainscoting.

G. Hardware: Original H-and-L hinges remain on the east exterior door in the passage.

H. Heating: Modern central heating has been installed, but the fireplaces remain in each room. The present mantels are replacements; the wooden classical one in the north room dates from the early twentieth century. The black marble Greek Revival mantel in the south room features engaged Ionic columns, pilasters, and a rectangular panel in the frieze. The fireplaces themselves retain rowlock segmental arches.

IV. Site: Hesse has a splendid east view across Godfrey Bay and the mouth of the Piankatank River to the Chesapeake Bay. The house is set on a bluff approximately one hundred yards from the river. The land or west approach is a long lane leading through the woods and straight through cultivated fields.

3. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Named for the German landgraviate, Hesse is noted as the seat of the Armisteads, a prominent colonial Virginia family. The present house probably dates from the second quarter of the eighteenth century, and is a classic example of Tidewater plantation architecture, particularly as expressed in the Mathews and Gloucester County area. The carefully chosen site of the house is superb, having a commanding view across the Piankatank out into the Chesapeake Bay.

The first Armistead in Virginia was William, who emigrated from Deighton Kirk in the West Riding of Yorkshire about 1635. As early as 1659, he had patented 500 acres on the Piankatank River in Gloucester County (now Mathews) - - the location of Hesse. At his death, the plantation was inherited by his son, John, "The Councillor." An important colonial figure, John was at various times sheriff of Gloucester, Member of the House of Burgesses, and Justice. He was a member of the Council for a time, but left this office when he refused to sign a loyalty oath to King William and Queen Mary.

One of the important factors in the Armistead family history is the marriages made by the offspring. By virtue of marriage, the Armisteads were the progenitors and relations of nearly every great family in Virginia. One of John Armistead's daughters, Judith, married Robert "King" Carter. The other daughter, Elizabeth, married Ralph Wormeley of Rosegill, one of the most influential men in the colony. John's son, Henry, who later inherited Hesse, married Martha, daughter of Lewis Burwell of Carter's Creek.

Henry Armistead died in 1739 and the family plantation passed to his son William. William's sisters also married prominent Virginians. Lucy married Thomas Nelson of Yorktown, Secretary of the Colony, and Martha married Dudley Digges, Burgess, also of Yorktown. William's son, William II, next inherited Hesse. He married Maria, daughter of Charles Carter of Cleve. His son William B. was designated Hesse's next heir, but died before his father. William II's other son, Charles Carter, was the last Armistead to own Hesse, and on his death the plantation, numbering about 3,900 acres, passed out of the family.

The construction date of the house has not been definitely established, but architectural evidence indicates that it was built during the ownership of either Henry Armistead, or his son William. A puzzling feature of the Hesse story is the reference, in a letter dated February 1798 from William Nelson of Prince William County to William Cocke, of Cartersville, Cumberland County, to the burning of "Hesse Mansion." This reference has given rise to much speculation, especially in regard to the existence of another earlier pile of the house. As noted in the Description section, the

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architectural evidence indicates that the main block of Hesse was never burned and has always been of the size and shape that it is today. Archaeological excavation, however, should provide information about the form and date of the structure whose foundations exist east of the house. A study of the remains might prove valuable to our knowledge of Virginia colonial architecture.

Hesse was sporadically occupied during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the mid-twentieth century it was acquired by Mr. and Mrs. John Maxwell, who with the aid of Marcellus Wright, Sr. planned the restoration and enlargement of Hesse to what they assumed to be its original size. These plans were not carried out. Today Hesse is being gradually renovated by Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Maxwell.

G.H.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

William Sumner Appleton, The Family of Armistead of Virginia, Boston: Press of David Clapp & Son, 1899.
 Emmie Ferguson Farrar, Old Virginia Houses, The Mobjack Bay Country, New York: Bonanza Books, 1955.
 Mrs. Virginia Armistead Garger, The Armistead Family, Richmond, Virginia: Whittet & Shepperson, 1910.
 Robert A. Lancaster, Historic Virginia Homes and Churches, Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1915.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	37 ° 31 ' 02 "	76 ° 22 ' 35 "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	37 ° 31 ' 02 "	76 ° 21 ' 30 "				
SE	37 ° 30 ' 38 "	76 ° 21 ' 30 "				
SW	37 ° 30 ' 38 "	76 ° 22 ' 35 "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **150 acres.**

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

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

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE

November, 1973

STREET AND NUMBER:

221 Governor Street

CITY OR TOWN:

Richmond

STATE

Virginia

CODE

51

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name

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

Title

Date

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date

ATTEST:

 Keeper of The National Register

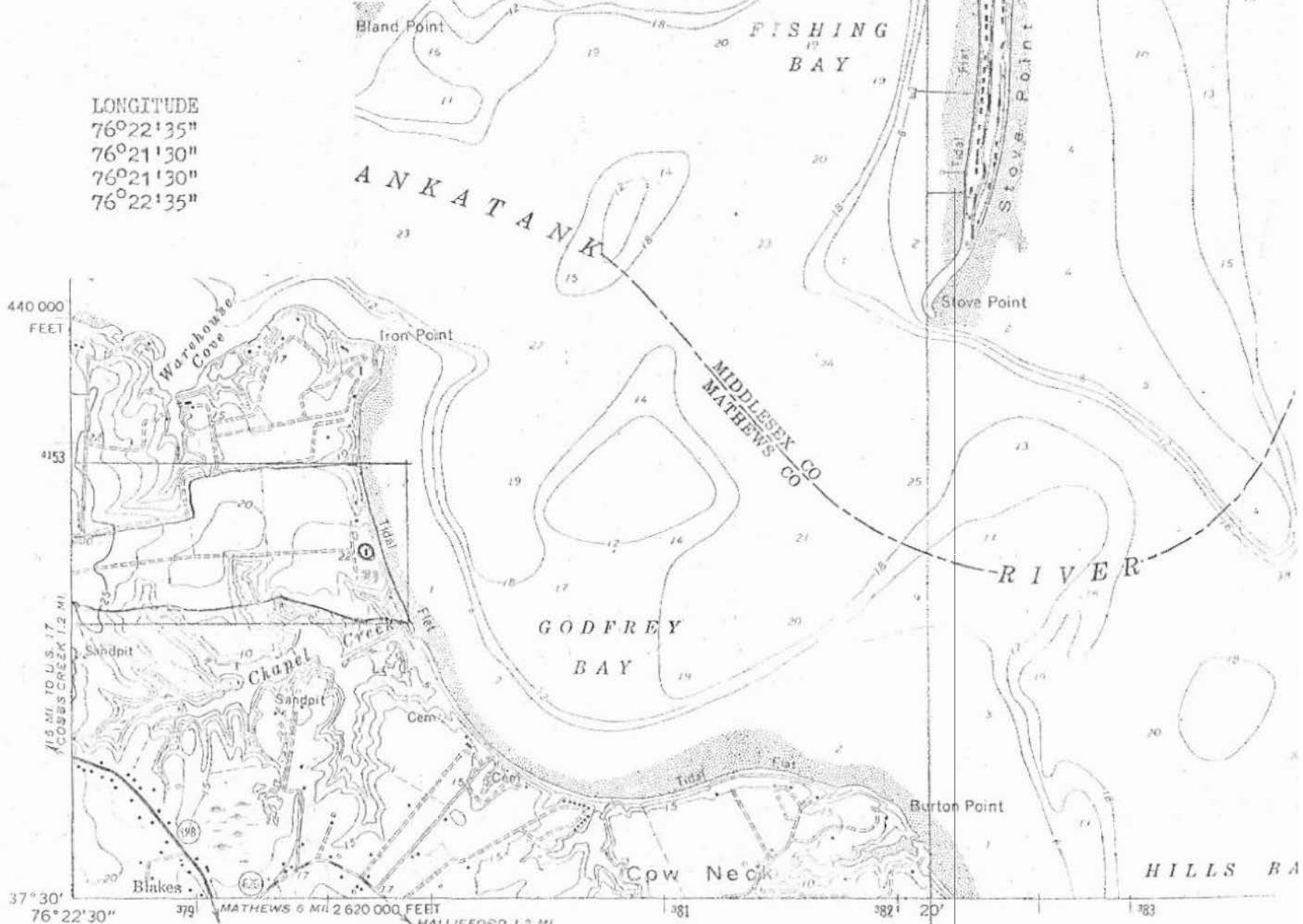
Date

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

HES-1

LATITUDE
NW37°31'02"
NE37°31'02"
SE37°30'38"
SW37°30'38"

LONGITUDE
76°22'35"
76°21'30"
76°21'30"
76°22'35"



(WAIVE NECK)
5150 14 11W

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and USCE

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial
photographs taken 1963. Field checked 1964
Supersedes U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey map dated 1948

Selected hydrographic data compiled from USC&GS Chart 534 (1964)
This information is not intended for navigational purposes

P lconic projection 1927 North American datum
1,000-foot grid based on Virginia coordinate system, south zone
1,000 meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 18, UTM



UTM GRID AND 1964 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET