

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

VDHR 12/4/12  
NRHP 11/3/17

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 Chester Plantation  
other names/site number Prince George Country Club VDHR # 074-0059

2. Location

street & number 8401 Golf Course Drive not for publication N/A  
city or town Disputanta vicinity N/A  
state Virginia code VA county Prince George code 149 zip code 23842

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets    does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant    nationally    statewide X locally. (    See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 9/18/12  
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 the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

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## 5. Classification

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**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>7</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
<u>8</u>	<u>1</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

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## 6. Function or Use

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**Historic Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Domestic</u>	Sub: <u>Single Dwelling</u>
<u>Domestic</u>	<u>Secondary Structures</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Current Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Domestic</u>	Sub: <u>Inn</u>
<u>Commerce/Trade</u>	<u>Restaurant</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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## 7. Description

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**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)

Mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century: Greek Revival  
Late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals: Colonial Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick  
roof Metal  
walls Wood  
other \_\_\_\_\_

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

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## 8. Statement of Significance

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**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

Business/Politics

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance** 1845-1957

**Significant Dates** 1845, 1949

**Significant Person** (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) Remmie L. Arnold

**Cultural Affiliation** N/A

**Architect/Builder** \_\_\_\_\_

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

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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(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

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**10. Geographical Data**  
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**Acreage of Property** 1.261 acres

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

Zone Easting	Northing	Zone Easting	Northing	
<u>1 18</u>	<u>0299700</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4112680</u>	<u>See continuation sheet.</u>

**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 Kimberly M. Chen; Jean McRae; Jennifer Parker  
organization Kimberly M. Chen & Associates, Inc.; Virginia Department of Historic Resources  
date 9/20/2002; revised 5/30/2003, 8/17/2007  
street & number 2701 East Broad Street telephone 804-225-9560  
city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23223

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**Additional Documentation**  
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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)

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

name Phillip R. and Florence Scruggs  
street & number PO Box 100 telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Disputanta state VA zip code 23842

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**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 36 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 the National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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**Chester Plantation  
Prince George County, Virginia**

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**Summary Description:**

Chester Plantation, built ca. 1845 by Williamson Simmons (1808-1885) on his 738-acre estate, is an excellent example of an evolved Greek Revival dwelling, with Colonial Revival additions. The plantation is situated on the brow of a low hill on the south side of State Route 630 (Baxter Road) near the town of Disputanta. The original building was a two-story, single-pile, center-hall-plan, frame dwelling. A two-story full-width porch, with full-height Doric columns, dresses the front facade. In 1854, a two-story frame wing was added to the rear of the house creating an L-shaped plan. In 1949, two 1-1/2-story wings were added to the east and west ends of the dwelling. In the 1980s the rear porches were enclosed and one-story additions constructed on the south side of the building. An open lawn slopes down to Baxter Road and the Norfolk and Western Railroad Co. tracks on the north, and to a lake on the west. The property consists of the historic dwelling, six contributing and one noncontributing outbuilding, and a contributing structure. Among the contributing outbuildings and structures are a swimming pool and pool house, dating from the 1940s, situated at the edge of the lake. Extant outbuildings are found on a flat lawn south of the house. The contributing outbuildings include an icehouse and well house built in the 1840s, a secondary dwelling built in the 1920s, and an open cart shed and concession building both constructed in the 1940s. A recently constructed, ca. 2001, equipment building near the pool house does not contribute to the architectural or historic significance of the property.

**Detailed Description:**

Site

Chester Plantation is sited on a gently sloping hill overlooking a lake and surrounded by an open lawn with scattered shade trees. A swimming pool and pool house, on the west side of the house, are situated near the edge of the lake. A circular pool and fountain are located between the dwelling and the pool house. Several outbuildings break up the open lawn south of the dwelling. A short access road, from Baxter Road on the north, approaches the house on the east side, separating the house and its grounds from the adjacent golf course. There is a parking area on the north side of the property. A hedge and circular drive shield the dwelling from the parking area. Across the drive, there is a shallow flight of brick steps with flanking brick piers. The steps lead to a concrete walk that is centered on the dwelling entrance. The walk terminates at four brick-cheeked steps that rise to the porch.

Exterior

The symmetrical, Greek Revival dwelling was built in three major phases. The earliest portion of the house, ca. 1845, is the two-story, three-bay, center-hall, single-pile-plan central block set on a common bond foundation with a shallow hipped roof. A two-story, gable-roofed wing was added to the south side of the house, ca. 1854, creating an L-shaped plan. In 1949, two four-bay 1-1/2-story gable-roofed wings with three gable-roofed dormers were added to the east and west ends of the building. A full-width porch with two-story fluted Doric columns accentuates the central block of the dwelling. The porch cornice has widely spaced carved brackets and a plain frieze. The brackets and plain frieze continue along the side of the dwelling below the hipped roof. Doric pilasters demarcate the edges of the dwelling. The centered four-panel entry door is deeply carved with recessed panels. The corners of the panels have a concave radius with carved bullets where the squared-off corners would be. Four-light sidelights and a ruby glass transom with a grapevine pattern flank the door. Three-part, floor-to-ceiling windows are symmetrically placed on either side of the door. The center portion of the windows has a six-over-nine light configuration and the smaller flanking sections are of a two-over-three configuration. The door and window architraves are unadorned and terminate in a shallow pediment. The second floor is five bays wide with symmetrically placed six-over-six windows. A common bond interior end chimney with a corbeled cap is still visible above the roof on the east end of the main block. The western chimney has been removed above the roof. Four-bay, 1 1/2-story wings were added to the east and west ends of the center block in the mid-twentieth century. Six-over-six windows are symmetrically placed in the wall with corresponding vents in the brick foundation. Three gable-roofed dormers, with six-over-six windows, pierce the gable roofs of the wings. The gable-ended east elevation has a centered, one-story three-sided projecting bay with a bell-cast roof. There is a six-over-six window and a French door in each of the narrow faces of the bay and an eight-over-eight window in the wider face. The door in the north façade of the projecting bay opens onto a deck with stairs. The rear or south elevation is composed of a series of

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additions and porch enclosures. The oldest section on this elevation is the two-story gable-roofed ell built ca. 1854. There is a common bond interior end chimney with a corbeled cap centered in the gable end. One-story shed-roofed porches that have been enclosed flank the two-story section. A shed-roofed porch on the south side of the east wing has been enclosed and a one-story shed-roofed addition built adjacent to this enclosed porch. A shed-roofed dormer has also been added to the rear of the east wing. On the west side, a one-story hip-roofed addition wraps around the enclosed shed-roofed porch and partially around the end of the two-story block. An exterior side, common bond chimney with a corbelled cap is centered on the south elevation of the west wing. The chimney stack extends above the gable roof. A five-sided projecting porch dominates the gable end of the west elevation. The basement or lower level of the porch is a covered patio that is partially enclosed by low retaining walls. Brick piers support the upper level of the porch that has turned posts, a balustrade of square pickets and a five-faceted roof. An open porch with a similar balustrade extends across the rear of the west wing and forms a ramp along the side of the two-story ell.

Interior

The interior of Chester Plantation was well documented in 1937 as part of a Works Progress Administration of Virginia Historical Inventory. The inventory is valuable in understanding changes made since 1937. The twisted stair is located in the northeast corner where it curves above the front door. The curvilinear sawn newel does not extend above the molded handrail and compliments the square picket balustrade. The plaster walls of the entry hall feature a molded base, plaster dado, chair board and molded surbase in the lower section. A dentiled cornice has been added at the ceiling. The molded base, plaster dado, chair board, molded surbase, and crown molding also, are found in the two parlors flanking the entry hall. The six-panel doors are raised on one face and flat on the other with box locks and brass hinges. The door and window architraves are molded. The windows have interior louvered shutters that are pocketed into the wall. The mantel in the west parlor has a molded cornice, plain frieze, and crossetted pilasters. The shelf of the eastern mantel is supported by paired, carved brackets. The frieze and pilasters have flat panels. The room to the rear of the entry hall has been significantly altered since 1937. The walls have been covered with vertical bead board paneling, crown and base moldings added and the fenestration changed. The Colonial Revival mantel has a mirrored over mantel. The western wing is a single room with raised paneling on the walls and an exposed beam ceiling. The wide mantel has a molded shelf and plain pilasters. The eastern wing is divided into a dining room, a bedroom, and bathrooms. The crown molding used in the earlier rooms continues in this part of the house. Wainscoting was not used in the eastern wing.

The central hall stair ascends to the second story in a gentle curve. The balustrade intersects a square post with decorative base at the second story. A slightly higher square picket balustrade encloses the open stairwell. Door and window architraves and crown molding, identical to those seen on the first story, are used in the hall and three bedrooms. The mantels on the second floor are the same in each room – freestanding colonnettes support a plain frieze and molded cornice. Below the projecting cornice, at the wall face is a second paneled frieze.

The cellar under the earliest part of the house has been sealed off and is no longer accessible. However, the area under the west wing is a large open room that serves as a dining room and commercial kitchen. The walls are decorated with a molded base, chair rail and cornice. At the eastern end of the basement is a large brick fireplace with two fireboxes, one square and one arched. A molded shelf breaks the massing as the stack steps back from the face of the box. A second large fireplace is centered in the southern wall. The second fireplace is constructed of randomly laid fieldstone with a molded shelf supported by molded consoles.

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**Inventory**

Single Dwelling, ca. 1845, Greek Revival, two-story, three-bay, center-hall-plan frame dwelling with a full-width, two-story porch with Doric columns, hip-roofed, with four bay, gable-roofed wings on both ends, **Contributing**

Ice House, ca. 1845, one-story, one-bay, gable-roofed, American bond brick building, **Contributing**

Well House, ca. 1845, one-story, one-bay, gable-roofed American bond brick building with a shed addition, **Contributing**

Single Dwelling, ca. 1920, Craftsman, one-story, three-bay, frame, hip-roofed dwelling, with a one-bay shed-roofed porch and two interior chimneys, **Contributing**

Cart Shed, ca. 1940, one-story, multiple bays, open post construction with a gable roof, **Contributing**

Concession Building, ca. 1940, is a one-story, three-bay, concrete block and frame building with flat roof with deep overhanging eaves and exposed rafters, **Contributing**

Pool House, ca. 1940, two-story, three bay, frame building with a deep shed-roofed porch on four sides set on a raised block foundation, **Contributing**

Swimming Pool, ca. 1940, concrete and tile, **Contributing Structure**

Equipment Shed, ca. 2001, one-story, one-bay, gable-roofed concrete block storage building, **Noncontributing**



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**Statement of Significance**

Chester Plantation, formerly known as "Chester" and "Arnolda Ranch", is located approximately ten miles southeast of Petersburg, Virginia in Prince George County. Fronting on the Norfolk and Western Railroad Company tracks and State Route 630 Chester Plantation retains 33 of its original acres, though all but the nominated 1.261 acres has been developed into a country club. Col. Williamson Simmons (1808-1885) began developing the land in 1844. "Chester" grew with Col. Williamson's accumulation of land. In the 1860s, being near Petersburg, the property was privy to the stress and unrest of the Civil War. Remaining in the Simmons family until the turn of the twentieth century, the land was slowly divided, changing hands several times before Remmie L. Arnold (1894-1971) bought the property. Arnold began amassing acreage once again. "Chester" Plantation stands as a testament to the evolutionary process typical throughout Prince George County and Virginia over the last two centuries. Developing into the Arnolda Ranch Country Club, the property is now part of the Prince George Country Club Estates and Golf Course. The plantation illustrates the development of architectural style in response to changes in national identity. It is a rare surviving example of antebellum architecture in Prince George County and is the only surviving example of a Greek Revival plantation in the county. Chester Plantation is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criteria B and C. Its period of significance spans from 1845, when the main block of the house was built, to the current 50-year cut-off of 1957, to account for the continuing occupation of Remmie Arnold during his years of active business and political activity.

**Historic Background**

Chester Plantation

Williamson Simmons, the builder of "Chester", was born 13 October 1808, the son of Sarah Baird and Coleman Simmons. Land tax and deed records show that Sarah Baird Simmons had built tenements on the property known as "Chester" farm during the 1830s. In 1843, Sarah Simmons transferred 299 acres to her son. It was on this parcel that Williamson built the house between 1845 and 1848. This is born out in the land tax records that show improvements on the property valued at \$598.00 in 1845 (the early tenements) had increased to \$1,628.00 by 1848.<sup>1</sup> Coincidentally, on 10 March 1845, Williamson Simmons married Mary Virginia Smith, the daughter of Lodowick and Mary Kennon Hughs Smith. An increase in tax dollars between 1851 and 1855 is indicative of the early expansion of the house. The addition is likely related to the birth of Williamson and Mary's children, for it was in this house that they reared four boys and four girls. By 1862, through a series of acquisitions, Simmons had amassed 848 acres on Second Swamp ("Chester" farm), ten miles southeast of the Petersburg Courthouse, with a building value of \$1,752.00. Simmons owned a second 365.5-acre farm eight miles southeast of the Petersburg.

During the Civil War, Simmons attained the honor of Colonel, while a member of the Prince George Cavalry. Oral tradition indicates that, "Chester" was the scene of much action during the Civil War. Though troops from both sides are said to have stolen food from the house, very little of the property was destroyed because of the hospitality shown by the Simmons family to both armies even though Williamson Simmons served in the Prince George Cavalry. On two other occasions meals were supposedly prepared for Confederate soldiers, but before they could be eaten Union troops arrived. The Confederates were hidden in a secret cellar under the kitchen while the Union troops ate the meals.<sup>2</sup> A tunnel led from the secret cellar to a ravine and creek where the lake is now sited.<sup>3</sup> Allegedly a skirmish, in which several Confederate Scouts were taken prisoner, one being killed and buried there, occurred in front of the house in April of 1865. In May, purportedly, a portion of Grant's army camped in the field north of the house and for three days the officers stayed in the house with the Simmons family.<sup>4</sup> The area in and around Petersburg was the scene of many battles and skirmishes during the Civil War. There is extensive documentation of troop movement along Jerusalem Plank Road and at Lee's Mill, just west of the property. In July of 1864, the 16<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Cavalry picketed at Old Shop Church brought the armies within a couple of miles of "Chester."<sup>5</sup>

Division of the property began as early as the 1850s when the Norfolk and Petersburg Railway Company, now Norfolk and Western Railroad Company, initiated plans for a single-track line through the southeastern part of Virginia. Preliminary surveys conducted in 1851 and 1852 by "General 'Billy' Mahone supported the feasibility of a railway. By his will, proved in court on 9 December 1886, Williamson Simmons left his estate to two of his sons, George and Bruce. The property remained in the Simmons family until 1918. The property changed hands several times before coming into Remmie Arnold's possession in

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1945. Mrs. Arnold claimed her enthusiasm for the "Chester" property was partly due to its connection to William Mahone, of Readjuster and Norfolk and Western Railway fame.<sup>6</sup> According to Mrs. Dorothy Arnold Waite, the daughter of Rennie and Charlia Arnold, "Mahone stayed at the house periodically while supervising the construction of the railroad." Arnold amassed more than 900 acres of farmland, pastures and woodland, which soon became known as Arnolda Ranch. The Arnolds renovated the dwelling and in 1949 added the wings to the original structure. They furnished the house with many handsome antiques acquired through their overseas travels. The grounds were beautifully landscaped with many improvements, including a lake to the west of the house and a large swimming pool.<sup>7</sup> Arnold conducted extensive farming operations, becoming a member of the Virginia 100-Bushel Corn Club in 1949, and raised Black Angus cattle while his wife, Charlia, raised Palomino horses.<sup>8</sup> In 1961, the Arnolds sold 711 acres of the Chester property to Blain B. and Louise F. Baugus. In 1963, Baugus opened an 18-hole golf course on the property, known as the Arnolda Ranch Country Club, later known as the Prince George County Golf Course. The house was converted to a restaurant and clubhouse. In 1981, the property was divided between the Prince George Golf Club and the Prince George Country Club Estates Development, who built houses along the west side of the lake. The current owners, Randy and Florence Scruggs purchased the house and 1.3 acres of land in 1999 and began the restoration of the house and the remaining outbuildings. Today, Chester Plantation, previously the residence of Col. Williamson Simmons and Rennie Arnold, is a restaurant and country inn.

**Justification: Criterion B**

Rennie LeRoy Arnold

Rennie LeRoy Arnold, born 25 January 1894 in Petersburg, Virginia, was the second of four children of Andrew Alexander Arnold and Mary Virginia Arnold. His father was an unskilled laborer, and provided his family with the barest of necessities. To supplement the family income, Arnold took his first job at age nine delivering newspapers for the *Petersburg Progress-Index*. In 1907, he quit school and took a full time job in a planing mill. Over the next two years, Arnold held a succession of jobs as a laborer in various factories in the Petersburg area. Having higher aspirations for himself, Arnold took a job as a freight clerk with the Seaboard Air Line Railroad. Arnold proved to have a head for figures and was soon promoted to an assistant in the local agent's office where he prepared extensive reports on the freight being shipped. After five years he transferred to the Norfolk and Western Railroad and in 1915 he secured a position as General Manager at the Edison Pen Company.<sup>9</sup> When Arnold joined Edison they occupied the third floor of the Leigh Building, in Petersburg, had one employee and were engaged in repairing pens and selling bottles of ink. Under Rennie Arnold's leadership the company began to assemble fountain pens using parts from other companies and soon they were manufacturing their own pens.

In 1935, Arnold came to the conclusion that if he could do it for others, he could do it even better for himself.<sup>10</sup> It was with this conviction that he established the R. L. Arnold Pen Company, Inc. on August 15, 1935. Arnold purchased the old Red Fox Pants Company's building on East Washington Street in Petersburg, equipped it with state-of-the-art machinery, and had a staff of 75 persons. As president and sole owner of his company, Arnold achieved great success from the start. Within twelve months, he doubled the size of the factory, and had approximately 200 employees in less than five years. "The company had extended its line to include not only fountain pens and pencils, but also flashlights and keychain permit holders and other novelties as well. A printing department had been set up which printed anything a customer wanted on pens, pencils and other products."<sup>11</sup> By the 1940s the R. L. Arnold Pen Company was the second largest pen manufacturer in the world with its products being sold throughout the United States and in many foreign countries.<sup>12</sup> The company continued to grow and prosper and in 1971, Rennie LeRoy Arnold, Jr. succeeded his father as president. Arnold Pen Company remained a family owned and operated business until it was sold in 1992. Still in operation the company manufactures printed pens for promotional purposes.

As the business grew, so did the responsibilities of Arnold as a civic leader and fraternal organization member. Rennie Arnold served on the Petersburg City Council from 1936 to 1944, where he advocated for better housing and recreational facilities for the city's black and white citizens. He also pointed out the pollution of the Appomattox River and organized and led the committee tasked with building a Petersburg airport. Arnold, being progressively minded, felt that a city in the 1930s without an airport was like one without a railroad station – left behind. Most people, including the City Manger, felt that an airport was unnecessary, primarily because so few people had ever been on an airplane. Arnold initiated contact with the Civil Aeronautic

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Authority in Washington, DC and secured funding for the project. The airport was built in 1940 using \$1.5 million of federal funding and only \$35,000 to \$40,000 of Petersburg's money to purchase the land.<sup>13</sup> In May 1940, Arnold wrote to President Roosevelt initiating the rehabilitation and reuse of Camp Lee, now known as Fort Lee. Camp Lee had been established near Petersburg at the beginning of World War I and had been used for the training of the 80<sup>th</sup> and 37<sup>th</sup> Divisions. When the war was over, the camp was closed, dismantled and abandoned. Arnold felt that the 7,000 acres could be used for purposes of the national defense program in light of Germany and Russia's recent invasion of Poland. Arnold's letter writing campaign did not end with the President; he dispatched letters to area Senators and Congressmen, as well as regional civic and business leaders. By November, the Army had committed itself to the rehabilitation of the camp.<sup>14</sup> In 1941, Camp Lee became the Quartermaster Replacement Training Center, a role it still serves today. Fort Lee is also a major employer in the Petersburg area.

Being too old for active service during World War II prompted Arnold, in 1943, to organize the Petersburg #1 Chapter of the American War Dads. The American War Dads, established in 1942, was an organization "to help servicemen keep in touch with their parents and to press the government for better medical treatment in the military and to prepare for postwar medical care, insurance, job training and education for veterans."<sup>15</sup> He was elected National President in 1943 and reelected in 1944.<sup>16</sup>

In his capacity as National President, Arnold traveled extensively in England, France and the United States and personally delivered thousands of letters from servicemen to their families. Arnold participated in several other fraternal and civic organizations throughout the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. Some of these included; National President of the Circus Saints and Sinners in 1938-39; District Deputy Exalted Ruler of the Elks in Virginia in 1944; and National Imperial Potentate of the Ancient Arabic Order, Nobles of the Mystic Shrine in 1953-54.<sup>17</sup>

In 1949, he campaigned for the Democratic Party nomination for Governor of Virginia. Arnold's platform was an unusual mixture of both progressive and conservative ideas. He advocated for better schools and adequate salaries and pensions for teachers. He opposed the poll tax, sought racial understanding and an improved welfare system. He was critical of labor unions and government intervention in business. He wanted improved game and forest conservation programs, supported highway beautification and the expansion of agricultural areas. Arnold had no chance against the other candidates and their political machines and placed fourth, garnering only seven percent of the vote. Though Arnold was not elected, the campaign illustrated his continued interest in, and commitment to, his state and country.<sup>18</sup> During the 1950s and 1960s Arnold withdrew from partisan organizations and focused his attentions on his business, fraternal activities and Arnolda Ranch. Rennie Arnold died of heart failure in 1971, but not before leaving a legacy as a leading humanitarian, philanthropist, businessman and civic leader in Petersburg and the state of Virginia.

**Justification: Criterion C (Architecture)**

Antebellum Plantation Architecture – Prince George County

Chester Plantation is an extremely rare example of surviving antebellum plantation architecture in Prince George County. Petersburg and the surrounding area saw intense military action during the Civil War, and the architectural landscape suffered heavy casualties as a result. The Union army's policy of total warfare resulted in the destruction of countless buildings throughout the South, and Prince George County was no exception. As punishment for felling the federal telegraph line from City Point (the modern day city of Hopewell) to Fort Monroe, a large number of homes were burned. Of the homes that did survive the local fighting, many others have succumbed to fire and termites. As a result, few antebellum plantations remain in Prince George County. Currently, only four other plantations in the county have been listed: Brandon (DHR # 074-0002), Evergreen (DHR # 074-0005), and Aberdeen (DHR # 074-0001) are on both the state and national register, while Upper Brandon (DHR #074-0027) is on the state register and awaiting completion for listing on the national register. None of these are representative examples of Greek Revival architecture: Aberdeen and Upper Brandon are both examples of the Early Classical Revival Style, while Evergreen and Brandon display Federal and Palladian influences, respectively. In fact, DHR records reflect no other antebellum examples of Greek Revival buildings in Prince George County. Nearby Petersburg has several, and this contrast serves to underline the dearth in its surrounding rural communities. Therefore, Chester Plantation, including its Colonial Revival alterations demonstrating the evolution of architectural and social tastes in the area, is an important architectural resource within Prince George County.

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Greek and Colonial Revival Architecture

The integration of the Greek and Colonial revivals in Chester Plantation illustrates changing attitudes toward history and the role of historical modes within American domestic architecture. Both styles are essentially derivative and associative – perhaps even more strongly when viewed as a unified whole in the architecture of Chester. The Greek Revival of the original residence does not directly reference Greek architecture, but that of the earlier architecture along the Potomac's Virginia shores, specifically, the attenuated portico of George Washington's home at Mount Vernon<sup>19</sup>. Furthermore, the Colonial Revival additions are deeply rooted in the architectural identity of Virginia; although they can be viewed as part of a larger, national trend toward the revival of early American architectural forms, Chester sits very close to the epicenter of the Colonial Revival, Colonial Williamsburg, and the architecture of the flanking wings can be viewed as a reference to local historic architecture as well. Indeed, the overall form created by the addition of the flanking wings harks back to the earlier plantation forms of the region – central block with symmetrical wings.

Although, in hindsight, both the Greek and Colonial Revival forms can be viewed as architectural celebrations of the nation's youth, both styles had specific associations and were part of larger, more complicated, cultural impetuses of their times. In the early nineteenth century, prior to the Civil War, America identified itself with classical culture. Greco-Roman architectural forms became the norm, while academies and universities sprang up in droves to provide a classical education to young America. Defending its decision to continue to provide a curriculum based on classical models, the Yale report of 1828 interweaves classical educational and architectural tropes, architecture being both symbol of and metaphor for a liberal education based on the highest ideals of Western thought.<sup>20</sup> The Greek Revival came to symbolize erudition based neither on religious nor practical knowledge, but on the ideas which formed the very foundation of Western civilization.

To the American, the Greek Revival also acted as an architectural symbol for the concept of democracy. It not only represented the cradle of democracy, Greece, but was also associated with Greece's struggle for independence from the Turks in the 1820s. This romantic struggle caught the imagination of Lord Byron, who heavily publicized and promoted Greece's plight, and consequently his American audience whose own struggle for independence was still fresh in their minds.

A century after Chester's Greek Revival architecture was built, another architectural form would celebrate America's struggle for independence more directly. The Colonial Revival looked directly to the early architecture of the colonies for its inspiration, a celebration of both national and local vernacular forms. The style was essentially patriotic, but also provided what the modern American required in a home – simplicity, efficiency and economy. Its unassuming forms were easily arranged according to functional considerations and could be inexpensively reproduced.

Furthermore, the Colonial Revival created an image of America that was Anglo-American, suggesting associations with an America prior to the immigration boom of the mid- to late-nineteenth century. Associations with Mediterranean cultures were less appealing to Anglo-Americans of the early-twentieth century, which suggested to them poverty, Catholicism and moral licentiousness – unappealing traits to a middle-class American culture of Protestantism and restraint. The Colonial Revival, whilst celebrating America's past, also suggests xenophobia and exclusivity amongst families who used architecture to distance themselves from the "wretched refuse" from economically depressed countries such as Ireland and Italy. Colonial Revival architecture was, therefore, a visual claim on America's heritage.

When looking at the marriage of the Greek and Colonial Revivals in the architecture of Chester Plantation, a change of attitude toward history and American identity are evident. When Chester Plantation was built in 1845, the owners chose to build in a style that linked them to a European heritage. Despite its architectural reference to Mount Vernon, the style is overwhelmingly Greek, however American it may appear to us today. Yet, a century later, the additions were designed in a purely American mode showing that, in the preceding one hundred years, America had finally gained her architectural independence from Europe. Indeed, the scale of the flanking wings threatens to overtake the original Greek Revival residence, heavily emphasizing the American architectural forms. Chester Plantation illustrates the transition from America as a new nation with European roots, to an independent nation with a history to be celebrated.

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**End Notes**

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- <sup>1</sup> Jennie S. Harrison, *Works Progress Administration of Virginia Historical Inventory*, (Virginia: Conservation Commission, 1937), pages 1, 3, and Auditor of Public Accounts, Prince George County Land Tax Books, (Various dates between 1830 and 1891), and Prince George County Courthouse Deed Record 18/172, (1843).
- <sup>2</sup> Jennie S. Harrison, *Works Progress Administration...*, page 3.
- <sup>3</sup> Interview with Mrs. Dorothy Arnold Waite
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>5</sup> Robert N. Scott, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series 1, Vol. XL, Part 1, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1892), page 208.
- <sup>6</sup> William Moseley Brown, *From These Beginnings: The Life Story of Rennie LeRoy Arnold*, (Virginia: McClure Printing Company, 1953), page 512.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid, pages 281, 512, 514.
- <sup>8</sup> William Moseley Brown, *From These Beginnings...*, pages 278, 287.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid, pages 77, 568, and John T. Kneebone, et. al., eds., *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, Vol. 1, (Virginia: Library of Virginia, 1998), page 216.
- <sup>10</sup> William Moseley Brown, *From These Beginnings...*, pages 83.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid, pages 84.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid, pages 83, 90.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid, 67, 233.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid, 220, 221, 222.
- <sup>15</sup> Kneebone, *Dictionary of Virginia Biography...*, page 216.
- <sup>16</sup> William Moseley Brown, *From These Beginnings...*, pages 111, 112, and John T. Kneebone, *Dictionary of Virginia Biography...*, page 216
- <sup>17</sup> William Moseley Brown, *From These Beginnings...*, pages 568, 569, 570, and John T. Kneebone, *Dictionary of Virginia Biography...*, page 216.
- <sup>18</sup> William Moseley Brown, *From These Beginnings...*, pages 155, 192, 203.
- <sup>19</sup> Talbot Hamlin credits the popularity of the attenuated double-height portico which stretches the width of the façade to George Washington's portico at Mount Vernon. This was particularly popular in the domestic architecture of the 1840s. Talbot Hamlin, *Greek Revival Architecture in America* (Dover: New York): 192.
- <sup>20</sup> W. B. Carnochan, "Education as Architecture" in *Journal of Aesthetic Education* (Autumn 2002): 8-12.

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**Geographical Data**

Verbal Boundary Description

The property boundaries are those described on a plat prepared by Charles C. Townes & Associates, P. C. on 1 February 2001 and labeled Phillip R. Scruggs Residence. This plat is Prince George County Tax Plat Map Book 411 Page 416.

Boundary Justification

While Chester was originally a plantation of over 700 acres, the parcel enclosed by the boundaries described above contains the original house and the extant dependencies. The surrounding property has been developed and no longer contributes to the historic character of the former plantation. The nominated property is all that is currently owned and original to the Chester Plantation and follows the plat map in Book 411 Page 416.

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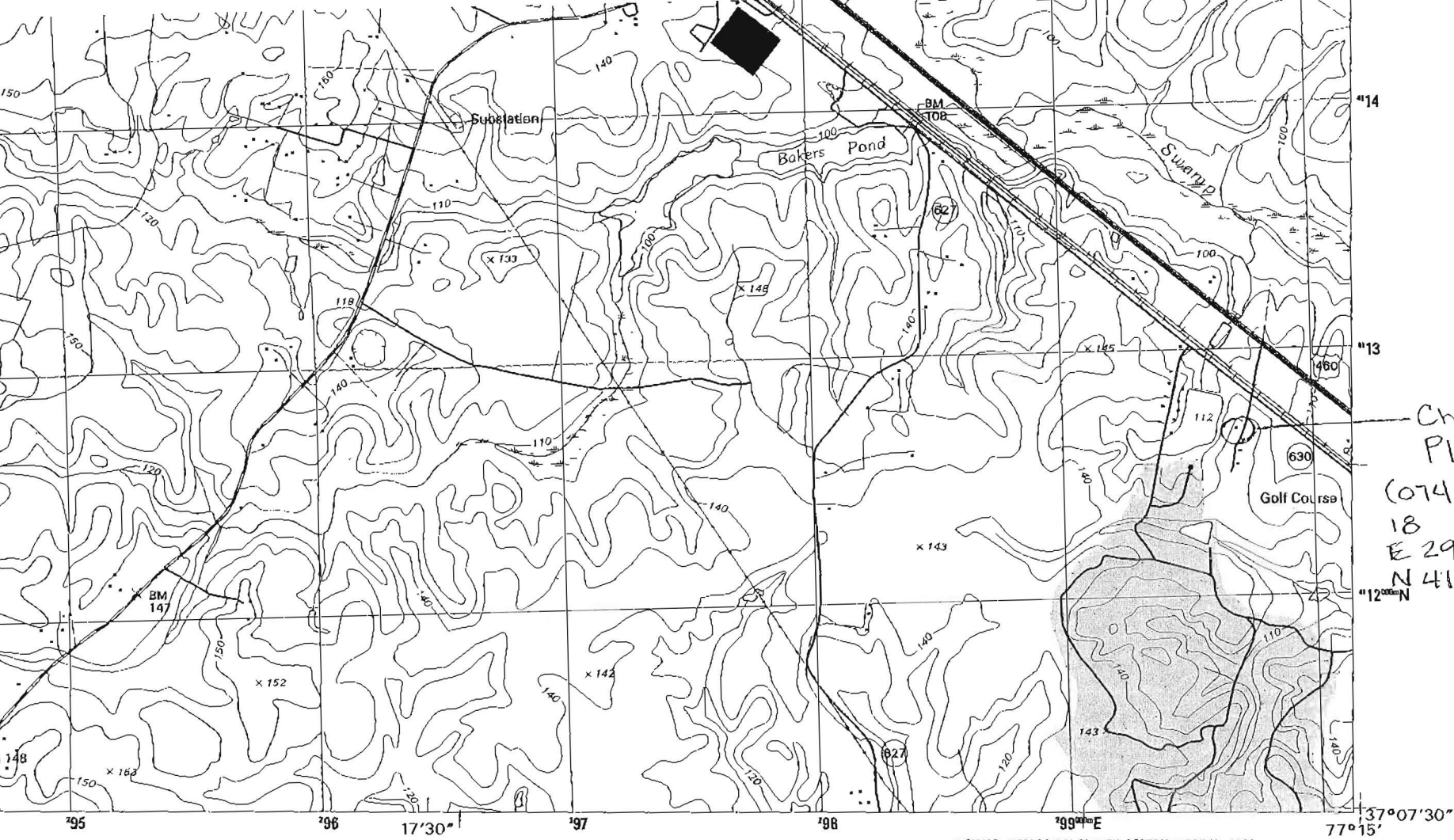
**Photographic Index**

The following information is the same for all photographs:

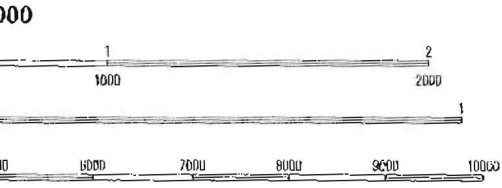
Property: Chester Plantation (074-0059)  
Location: Prince George County, Virginia  
Photographer: Kimberly M. Chen  
Date: 15 May 2001  
Negatives File: Virginia Department of Historic Resources  
2801 Kensington Avenue  
Richmond, Virginia  
Negative Number: 19968

- 1 of 11: Facade looking South
- 2 of 11: Northeast corner looking Southwest
- 3 of 11: Rear looking North
- 4 of 11: Front Door
- 5 of 11: Ice House looking Southeast
- 6 of 11: Pool House looking Northwest
- 7 of 11: Cart Shed and Single Dwelling looking Southeast
- 8 of 11: Hall and Stair looking Northeast
- 9 of 11: First Story, East Dining Room looking East
- 10 of 11: First Story, door detail
- 11 of 11: First Story, Dining Room in West Wing looking Southeast





Chester  
Plantation  
(074.0059)  
18  
E 299700  
N 4112.680



INTERIOR - GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 1998  
**ROAD CLASSIFICATION**

- Primary highway hard surface .....
- Secondary highway hard surface .....
- Light-duty road, hard or improved surface .....
- Unimproved road .....
- Interstate Route (shield symbol)
- U.S. Route (square symbol)
- State Route (circle symbol)

**QUADRANGLE LOCATION**

1	2	3	1 Chester 2 Hopewell 3 Westover
4		5	4 Petersburg 5 Disputanta North 6 Carson
6	7	8	7 Templeton 8 Disputanta South

**PRINCE GEORGE, VA**  
37077-B3-TF-024  
1994

SCALE 1:10 FEET  
VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929  
RADIO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA 22903  
SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ADJOINING 7.5' QUADRANGLE NAMES

DMA 5558 III NE-SERIES V834

