

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Rotherwood

Other names/site number: DHR ID 087-0045

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 15410 Southampton Parkway

City or town: Capron State: VA County: Southampton

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

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 at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___ B X C X D

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the 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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	objects
<u>11</u>	<u>2</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/Agricultural field, Agricultural outbuilding

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/Agricultural field, Agricultural outbuilding

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MID-19TH CENTURY/Greek Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK, WOOD/Weatherboard, GLASS.

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Rotherwood is an early nineteenth century agricultural estate and former plantation that retains a high degree of architectural integrity associated with its period of significance. The property is located in rural Southampton County off Southampton Parkway (Highway 58) in southeast Virginia. The boundaries of the property consist of a 58-acre portion of the current tax parcel containing the known historic resources and confirmed archaeological sites. The current parcel itself (197 acres) is a portion of the original agricultural estate, and is situated approximately three miles west of the town of Capron, Virginia. The property is not visible from Highway 58, and is accessed via a winding dirt and gravel road. Primarily surrounded by farmland, the core of the property is situated in a smaller rectangular, landscaped area that is accessed by a long, tree-lined dirt driveway branching off from Southampton Parkway. Rotherwood consists of an intact early nineteenth century dwelling, surrounded by agricultural fields and retains at least one early nineteenth century outbuilding and several twentieth century agricultural outbuildings located to the north of the house. The main house is set apart from the outbuildings and sits on a hill overlooking the fields southeast of the driveway. The main yard is enclosed with a modern brick wall to the northwest and northeast, a post and wire fence to the southeast, and a line of trees to the southwest behind the house. Wooded areas located beyond the immediate farmland largely

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obscure the property to the south, west, and along the road to the north. On the southern end of the boundary just before the open fields turn to wooded forest is an archaeological site that has been documented as the potential location of former dwellings for enslaved persons.

Narrative Description

Setting

Rotherwood is located in rural Southampton County off Southampton Parkway in southeast Virginia. Part of an expansive rural landscape, the areas surrounding the property largely consists of farmland and other agricultural resources. The property is not visible from the road, as the core of the property is situated in a smaller rectangular, landscaped area that is accessed by a long, tree-lined dirt driveway branching off from Southampton Parkway. Located southeast of the driveway, the house sits on a large, rectangular grass hill overlooking mostly flat farmland to the northeast. The main yard is partially enclosed with a brick wall constructed ca. 2021-2022 along the east and north yards, while a post-and-wire fence encloses the south and west sides of the main house yard. Openings along the north brick wall provide access to the outbuildings and driveway. Within the main yard, small bushes are situated around the perimeter of the house and frame the small brick walkway connecting to the front steps of the house. A bell, situated on a large wooden post, is located in the western corner of the yard. Additionally, the well is located northwest of the house within the main yard. A narrow grassy area, with bushes and small trees, surrounds the perimeter of the main yard, and large cultivated fields are also located around the core of the property.

The outbuildings, although located in close proximity to the house, are clustered in a separate larger area at the end of the driveway and north of the house. A curved dirt road runs through the main area providing access to each of the outbuildings. Although the layout of the outbuildings is irregular, they are largely situated on either side of the dirt road and are all loosely contained within the same rectangular area which is bordered by a row of trees to the northeast and southwest. Uncultivated grass fields are located beyond to the north. Wooded areas located beyond the house, outbuildings, and immediate farmland, largely obscure the property to the south, west, and along the road to the north. Although a few of the outbuildings on-site have been lost, the setting largely remains unchanged.

A. Main House (c.1809, ca. 1820, ca. 1851-52) – Contributing Building

The main house is a two-story, five-bay, rectangular, wood-frame, Greek Revival-style plantation house. Typical of many extant early nineteenth century dwellings, Rotherwood's primary residence is an evolved resource that was constructed in phases. Physical and documentary evidence suggests that the earliest phase of construction began as early as 1809. Between 1809 and 1820, a one-story addition was constructed on the north end of the house. In

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1851-52, the house was again enlarged and remodeled. The house's mid-nineteenth century Greek Revival features present today most likely date to this third phase of construction.

Exterior

The main house has a brick foundation, wood weatherboard siding, and a hipped, metal standing-seam roof with a simple molded cornice. There are two interior-end brick chimneys, with corbeled caps. Windows largely include six-over-six, double-hung, wood-sash with wood sills and paneled wood shutters. Windows on the first floor are taller. Typical of the style, the façade is balanced with symmetrically-placed windows flanking a central portico entry. The one-story, one-bay entry portico is more consistent with the design of a Greek Revival portico with its Doric columns and full entablature. Slightly raised, it has a brick foundation, wood decking, and is accessed by brick steps. Photographs taken of the house in 1937 show two large columns supporting either side of the porch, but by 1973, only the two remaining columns were extant. It has a flat metal, standing-seam roof and full entablature, with a simple molded cornice, a wide frieze band with a row of tiny dentils, and plain architrave, and is supported by fluted Doric columns and Doric pilasters. The main entrance features a single-leaf, four-panel wood door and screen door set within an architrave trim surround including a crisscross-patterned multi-light rectangular transom and crisscross-patterned multi-light sidelights with a wood panel below.

The north and south two-bay side elevations feature asymmetrically-placed windows. The south elevation has an additional single-leaf, four-paneled, wood entry door set under a narrow, one-story porch. Supported by square, wood, Doric columns and pilasters, the porch has a simple entablature and a hipped, metal, standing-seam roof. Wood panels enclose the lower portion of the sides of the porch. It has a brick foundation, wood decking, and is accessed by brick steps. Due to severe deterioration of the wood decking, modern wood decking has been temporarily applied over the historic decking. On each side elevation, the windows and porch directly abut the southwest corner board. As a result, there is no room for the second shutter.

The rear, or west, elevation is similar to the layout of the façade with the exception of an additional entrance and a larger porch. The three-bay, one-story porch is supported by simple, square, wood columns and has a simple frieze and cornice with a flat, metal, standing-seam roof. It has a brick pier foundation that has been infilled with concrete block, wood decking, and is accessed by brick steps. Physical evidence suggests that the rear porch was added at a later date. The rear entrance, which is located in the central bay, includes a single-leaf, four-paneled wood door and screen door flanked by three-light sidelights with a lower wood panel all set within a simple flush wood surround. Another single-leaf entrance, which directly accesses the kitchen to the northwest, has a four-panel wood door and screen door set within a simple flush wood surround.

Interior

The interior of the main house has a double-pile, central hall plan on the first and second floor, with two rooms on each side of the central hall. The first floor features a central passage plan

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flanked by two rooms on either side. A small half bath was added in the location of a former closet at the far southeast corner of the house. Each room features a fireplace with a simple wooden mantel. The fireboxes have been enclosed and converted to gas in all rooms.

The wide central hall, which is accessed by an entrance at the front and rear of the house, features an open-well staircase, with a mid-level landing, towards the south corner of the hall. The wood, open-string staircase has a large decorative, turned newel post at the base and a full bathroom is located at the east end of the hall directly above the front entry, in the location of a former cloak or storage room. Bedrooms flank the second-floor hall, with the two larger bedrooms located at the front end of the house.

Materials include wide plank wood floors, plaster walls, and plaster ceilings on the first floor. Prior to 2005, sheetrock was applied over the existing ceiling and then replastered in the second-floor bedrooms. Trim includes tall, simple baseboards consistent with the Greek Revival style and decorative wood architrave trim around the doors and windows. The first-floor central hall, parlor, and kitchen feature a deeply reeded, plaster crown molding. Door surrounds branching off the first-floor central hall also feature simple corner blocks. The windows all have decorative wood window sills, and the first-floor windows also have decorative wood panels extending to the floor below each window. Overall, the floors, walls, ceilings, and majority of trim appear to be in good condition with only some minor plaster cracks and wood trim deterioration as a result of what appears to be water damage. Interior doors throughout the house include large four-panel wood doors accessing the rooms and narrow two-panel wood doors accessing closets. Large pocket doors likely divided the parlor and kitchen, but the opening has been narrowed to a single door opening. Decorative trim marks the former opening. The majority of the doors retain their rim locks; however, some have been replaced with polished brass knobs. Central heat and air conditioning have been added.

B. Outbuilding 1 (c.1820) – Contributing Building

Outbuilding 1 is a one-story, wood frame building with a steeply pitched gable roof covered with standing seam metal surrounded by pent-roof lean-tos on all elevations. The lean-to shed additions were constructed by the early twentieth century, and are largely open and supported by a mixture of round logs and square posts. The central core of the building has a brick pier foundation, supporting hewn sills and rough-cut log joists. The exterior has been almost entirely reclad with circular sawn (or later) wood clapboard siding. On the south elevation, however, a portion of the original beaded weatherboard is extant on the top half of the wall. The weatherboard retains wrought nails and shows evidence that the building was once whitewashed on the exterior. The primary entrance is located on the south elevation and a double-sheathed wood door with strap hinges hangs in the opening. On the rear, north elevation is an opening with a four-panel door likely reused from an area of the Rotherwood main house.

Partially exposed wall framing on the north elevation reveals sash or pit sawn framing. The interior walls have been covered with modern drywall or plywood. The ceiling features tongue

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and groove boards with smoothly finished and beaded joists. The floor has been covered with modern carpet. Based on the presence of detailed finishes such as the beaded ceiling joists, beaded weatherboard, and whitewashing, this outbuilding may have served as a more significant purpose on the landscape, or was highly visible to visitors. While oral tradition has asserted that this building may have served as a secondary dwelling, no evidence of a chimney or heating source was found during the fieldwork. Without a chimney, it is unlikely that the building served as a dwelling.

C. Well (c.1950) – Contributing Structure

This well structure, which is no more than three feet in height, has a concrete block foundation and walls. It is capped by a wood-framed side-gable roof clad in asphalt shingles that appears to be removable.

D. Shed (c.1900) – Contributing Building

This one-story, one-bay, wood-frame, shed has wood clapboard siding and a front-gable, metal, standing-seam roof with boxed, overhanging eaves on the sides. The foundation is not visible. The façade, or northeast elevation, features a single board-and-batten door with strap hinges. A single wood-framed window opening, which has been covered, is located on the southeast elevation. The building, which has significant vine growth from the roof and vegetation along the side, is currently in poor condition with numerous deteriorated siding boards.

D. Lean-to (c.1990) – Non-contributing Structure

Similar to a pole barn, this one-story, rectangular structure is supported by three large wooden posts on each side and in the center. It has a shed, metal-standing seam roof with exposed rafters and rafter tails.

E. Metal Machine Shed (c. 1970) – Contributing Building

This large, one-story, one-bay metal machine shed has a concrete foundation, all-purpose vertical metal siding, and a flat metal roof. The façade, or northwest elevation, features a large sliding loading door. A metal-framed opening, which has been covered, is located on the northeast elevation. A shed lean-to, with wooden support posts and a corrugated metal roof, is appended to the southwest elevation.

F. Pole Barn (c. 1970) – Contributing Structure

The wide one-story, one-bay pole barn has a front-gable, metal standing-seam roof with metal cladding on the gable face at each end. It is supported by square wooden posts on each side that are connected via cross brace framing for extra support. An open structure at each end, the roof rafters remain exposed.

G. Barn (c.1950, c. 2007) – Non-contributing Building

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This rectangular, one-story wood frame barn consists of an enclosed section with an open pole barn attached to the front. The building, likely constructed in the mid-twentieth century was damaged after c. 1994, and the front portion of the building was demolished and the new open section appended to the front of the building. The building rests on a concrete block foundation, has deteriorated wooden siding, and a metal, standing seam roof. The pole barn addition is supported by wooden posts and has exposed rafters. Overall, the building is in poor condition with severe deterioration to the wood siding, missing siding boards, and close and in-grown vegetation negatively impacting the materials and stability.

H. Corrugated Metal Shed 2 (c.1950) – Contributing Building

This one-story, one-bay shed has a concrete foundation, plywood siding covering corrugated metal, and a front-gable, corrugated metal roof with boxed eaves. A tall, double-leaf entrance is located on the northwest elevation; cut-out window openings flank the entrance. Overall, the building is in poor condition with several holes in the siding and deterioration of the plywood and roof material.

I. Metal Grain Bin 1 (c.1970) – Contributing Structure

J. Metal Grain Bin 2 (c.1970)— Contributing Structure

K. Metal Grain Bin 3 (c.1970)— Contributing Structure

These three, circular silos have corrugated metal siding and a conical metal, v-crimp roof. Each has a roof ladder attached and a central, circular lid, as well as another oval lid on the side of the roof. Each also has a narrow, metal access door on the side.

L. Bell Pole (c.1980) – Non-contributing Object

A metal bell tethered to a rope sits atop a square wooden post. The bell appears to be historic, but it is unclear where it was originally used and if it is associated with Rotherwood historically.

M. South Field Archaeological Site– Contributing Site

The South Field is located approximately 300 feet south of the main house in an open agricultural field just north of the wooded portion of the parcel. Archaeological investigations, specifically controlled surface collection, of the area conducted in 2010-2011 revealed a significant concentration of historic artifacts associated with the enslaved population that lived at Rotherwood. Artifacts collected were mapped revealing a distinct pattern and concentration. The items collected as well as the location downslope from the main house suggests this area may have been the location of former slave dwellings. More intensive archaeological testing in the future may reveal additional features that could help better understand the history of the enslaved population at Rotherwood.

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Integrity Analysis

Although several of the secondary resources have been lost and some changes have occurred over time, the relationships among the extant buildings are unchanged and the striking views of the rural landscape remain largely undisturbed. Thus, the present-day area associated with the historic Rotherwood retains a high degree of integrity. Although reduced in size, the property's boundary represents the physical area originally associated with the historic plantation house, adjacent agricultural buildings and fields, and historic landscapes and archaeological resources associated with the enslaved population, thereby retaining integrity of setting and location. The buildings and structures on the property retain the physical elements associated with their original design, including the general architectural features, form, and stylized elements. Additionally, the buildings largely retain their original historic materials. Therefore, the property retains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Lastly, the property retains integrity of feeling and association with a nineteenth and early twentieth century farm.

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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 grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

AGRICULTURE

ARCHAEOLOGY/Historic—Non-Aboriginal

ETHNIC HERITAGE/Black

Period of Significance

1820-1972

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

African-American

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

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Rotherwood is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, C, and D, at the local level of significance. Rotherwood is locally significant in the area of Agriculture as a well-preserved nineteenth century plantation that evolved into an agricultural estate following the Civil War, continuing to operate into the mid-twentieth century. The property retains a relatively high number of agricultural outbuildings that span the early nineteenth century through the late twentieth century and represent more than a century of agricultural technology. Rotherwood is also eligible in the areas of Archaeology and African-American History for its association with upwards of 100 enslaved persons who lived and worked on the property. Archaeological investigations on the property have located at least one site with the potential to yield information about the lives of these enslaved individuals. Additionally, census, probate, and family documents provide insight regarding the enslaved population, as well as a relatively high number of named enslaved persons that lived at Rotherwood across the nineteenth century. The property is also locally significant in the area of Architecture for its collection of vernacular outbuildings, as well as the c. 1851 Greek Revival-style main house. The period of significance for Rotherwood begins in 1820, when the earliest extant outbuilding was constructed. Because the property continued to operate as a working farm with agricultural buildings representative of twentieth century advancements in farming technology and machinery, the period of significance for Rotherwood ends in 1972.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

In 1775, Southampton County native, Thomas Ridley purchased 576 acres of land that later become known as Rotherwood from his uncle, James Ridley.¹ Soon after, in 1776, Ridley enlisted for service in the Revolutionary war and was appointed Captain of the 4th Virginia Regiment from Southampton County.² By 1778, Ridley was promoted to the rank of Major of the 10th Virginia Regiment of the Continental Line, which soon became the 6th Virginia Regiment as regiments were consolidated.³ During the war, Ridley is said to have exhibited great courage at the Battle of Brandywine, and empathy and kindness to a wounded British soldier.⁴ Although Thomas Ridley retired in 1783 with the rank of Major of the 1st Virginia Regiment, the Governor of Virginia appointed Ridley as a Colonel of the Militia of Southampton County in 1785.⁵

Following his military retirement in 1783, Ridley returned to Southampton County where he became a planter and prominent member of Southampton County society. Due to his service in the Revolutionary War immediately following his purchase of the property, it is estimated that at this time the Rotherwood lands began to take shape as an agricultural estate. By the time of his

¹ Matthew R. Laird, *Rotherwood, Southampton County, Virginia: A History, 1607-2011* (Williamsburg, VA: James River Institute for Archaeology, Inc., 2011), 4.

² Henry W. Lewis, *Southampton Riddleys and their kin* (Chapel Hill, NC: Private Publisher, 1961), 24.

³ Lewis, *Southampton Riddleys and their kin*, 24.

⁴ Laird, *Rotherwood*, 4.

⁵ Lewis, *Southampton Riddleys and their kin*, 25.

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death in 1815, the original 576 acres had been expanded to include over 3,500 acres.⁶ Upon his return home, Ridley served as a Justice of the Peace in 1784, and was elected as a Vestryman of St. Luke's Parish in 1785. The same year, Ridley was elected to the Virginia House of Delegates for Southampton County, a position he continued to hold until 1787. In 1790, he was elected to the Virginia state Senate and was re-elected to this position through 1800. Ridley was also an original member of the Society of the Cincinnati, a fraternal organization of Continental Army officers established in 1783 that selected George Washington as the organization's first President General.⁷

Although it is unknown exactly what crops were initially grown at Rotherwood, tobacco cultivation was beginning to decline in the late-eighteenth century, and most farmers in Southampton County had transitioned to growing grain crops like wheat and corn.⁸ Farmers within the county also dealt in hogs and timber as additional sources of income.⁹ Probate records from Colonel Thomas Ridley's death in 1815 indicate that he owned work horses, hogs, horned cattle, and sheep at Rotherwood. Tax records from the early nineteenth century also indicate that Ridley owned 40 enslaved African Americans. In his will, he named eight individuals: Lewis, Dick, Pompey, Robin, Hannah, Maggie, Dinah, and Cynthia. These enslaved persons were left to his wife, Amey. Ridley also left his wife the "land and plantation wheron I now live." Amey died shortly after Thomas, and in 1815, their youngest son, Francis Ridley inherited Rotherwood, the eight named individuals, as well as all of Ridley's unnamed enslaved persons.¹⁰

A graduate of William and Mary College, Francis Ridley served two terms in the Virginia House of Delegates between 1813-1815. Francis Ridley died only a few years later in 1822, leaving the Rotherwood estate to his son Francis T. Ridley.¹¹ Francis T. (or Frank) Ridley attended Trinity College, and studied law at the University of Virginia. Unlike his father and grandfather, however, he did not practice law nor become a politician. Instead, he focused on agricultural production. By the mid-nineteenth century, Frank Ridley was one of 80 planters, those owning more than 500 acres, in Southampton County. Frank married Elizabeth "Bettie" Norfleet Goodwyn in 1841, and the two had six children. In 1851-1852, Frank Ridley made substantial additions to Rotherwood's main house, which doubled the property's improvement value from

⁶ Laird, *Rotherwood*, 4-5.

⁷ John Cropper, "List of original members of the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Virginia," Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Virginia (Richmond: The Society, 1896). Accessed August 19, 2022. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcmassbookdig.listoforiginalme00soci/?st=gallery>; Lewis, *Southampton Riddleys and their kin*, 25; Patrick Allan Pospisek, "Society of the Cincinnati," George Washington's Mount Vernon. Accessed August 19, 2022. <https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/society-of-the-cincinnati/>.

⁸ Laird, *Rotherwood*, 14.

⁹ The Ottery Group, Inc., "Historic Structures Survey of Southampton County, Virginia," for the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (Silver Spring, MD: The Ottery Group, Inc., May 2008), 13.

¹⁰ James River Institute for Archaeology, Inc., *Archaeological Investigations at Rotherwood*, 10.

¹¹ Laird, *Rotherwood*, 7.

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\$1,000 to \$2,000.¹² The house was expanded, likely to accommodate the large family, and remodeled with Greek Revival style elements popular during the mid-nineteenth century.

During the early-nineteenth century, farmers in Southampton County began diversifying their crops as repeated cultivation of wheat and corn depleted the soil of its nutrients. Additionally, a staple component of the majority of farms in Southampton County during this period was an orchard, typically apples and peaches, some of which was used to support the family and some sold for the creation of apple and peach brandy.¹³ Under Frank Ridley, Rotherwood consisted of 1,000 acres of agricultural fields, which produced crops including wheat, corn, oats, cotton, peas, beans, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, hay, apples, and peaches. Additionally, the plantation included livestock such as horses, mules, working oxen, dairy cows, cattle, sheep, and hogs.¹⁴ Frank Ridley also owned another 3,000 acres of unimproved woodland, which may have been used for lumber production, as was common in the county.¹⁵

Frank Ridley's life as a "gentlemen farmer" and his vast landholdings were supported by the labor of enslaved African Americans. The number of enslaved persons that Frank Ridley owned increased considerably during the mid-nineteenth century from those he inherited as child. Frank also inherited six enslaved individuals from his father-in-law, William B. Goodwyn in 1849. Court records indicate the names of these persons, along with their estimated monetary value, which totaled \$2,625, more than the Rotherwood house: Daniel (\$1,000), George (\$100), Clara (\$350), Liddia (\$400), Abraham (\$425), and Fanny (\$350). The high value assigned to several of these individuals, and especially Daniel, suggests that he was likely a very skilled laborer. By 1850, Ridley owned 74 enslaved persons, and by 1860, at least 102. Approximately 38 percent of the enslaved population at Rotherwood were children under the age of 16. The number of children present, as well as the population increase each decade suggests that there may have been opportunities for the development of family units, which led to natural increase of the enslaved population.¹⁶ Additionally, at least eight individuals over the age of 60 were recorded at Rotherwood, and several individuals lived well into their 80s and 90s.

Like many Antebellum enslavers, the Ridleys had complex relationships with the enslaved persons at Rotherwood, as well as paternalistic ideas about the institution of slavery. In 1861, William G. Ridley, the son of Frank Ridley, wrote to his family regarding his concern for those who had fallen ill at home, writing "I am uneasy here all the time, for when I hear of sickness at home, either in the black or white family, I want to be there."¹⁷ William Ridley also noted that

¹² Laird, *Rotherwood*, 6.

¹³ The Ottery Group, Inc., "Historic Structures Survey of Southampton County, Virginia," 14.

¹⁴ Laird, *Rotherwood*, 14.

¹⁵ Laird, *Rotherwood*, 14.

¹⁶ Laird, *Rotherwood*, 10; James River Institute for Archaeology, Inc., *Archaeological Investigations at Rotherwood*, 4; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1850 U.S. Federal Census – Slave Schedules*, Ancestry.com Accessed August 10, 2022; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1860 U.S. Federal Census – Slave Schedules*, Ancestry.com. Accessed August 10, 2022.

¹⁷ Laird, *Rotherwood*, 12.

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the accommodations at Craney Island in November 1861 were “not as nice” as the slave quarters at Rotherwood. In 1862, Bettie Ridley wrote about walking over to see Peggy in her newly constructed, two-room dwelling, and visiting Nancy’s baby. In 1858, Frank Ridley, who had inherited most of the enslaved individuals he owned, wrote of his concerns regarding the profitability of his Virginia plantation and the enslaved labor, and considered the potential financial benefits of moving his enslaved laborers to Texas.¹⁸ While some of the family’s contemporary accounts demonstrate a certain level of concern, care, and even community among Black and white individuals, Frank Ridley’s letter serves as a reminder that the enslaved population at Rotherwood did not have the freedom to choose their circumstances and were exploited for their enslaver’s financial gain.

As with many Virginia farms, the Civil War significantly altered the scale of the agricultural operations at Rotherwood. It does not appear that the impact of Emancipation was immediate, however. In 1871, Bettie Ridley wrote to friends that there were “as many slaves of the farm nearly as in the days of slavery... as many in our service as we wish... others occupying housing with the understanding that we command their labor when we want it.”¹⁹ It is unlikely that there were many opportunities for freedmen in Southampton County following Emancipation. The Ridley family letters and archaeological evidence suggest that African Americans continued to live and work at Rotherwood during the Reconstruction period, and some appear to have also become tenant farmers on the property, including Daniel Chapman.²⁰ By the 1880s, however, the Ridleys were cultivating only 31 acres at Rotherwood for corn and Irish potatoes, and 10-acres as an apple orchard. Many of the other cultivable acres were leased out in smaller tracts to other farmers. The Ridleys also sold cordwood from the property for additional income, and their livestock had dwindled significantly from their pre-war numbers.²¹

The Ridleys ownership history came to a close in 1883 when Robert J. Neely, Frank Ridley’s son-in-law, sold the property to Dr. Joseph H. M. Sykes. Although details about the crops and agricultural operations at Rotherwood during the end of the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries remain obscured, the land continued to be utilized for agriculture. A plat of Sykes Farm depicts the pattern of agricultural fields and woodlands at Rotherwood, as well as outbuildings and other resources that were possibly tenant farms.²² Sykes owned Rotherwood until 1910. The property changed hands a few times during the early years of the twentieth century until purchased by William H. Vincent, one of the founders of the nearby town of Capron. While Vincent only owned the property for a short time before his death, the property passed to his wife Sarah E. Vincent in 1919. The property then passed through the Vincent family heirs to the Rawlings and Jones through the end of the twentieth century, primarily following the female line

¹⁸ Laird, *Rotherwood*, 12.

¹⁹ Bettie Ridley to Georgia, 12 March 1871

²⁰Bettie Ridley to Georgia, 12 March 1871. Based on available research at time of this nomination, it is unclear whether this is the same Daniel valued at \$1,000, whom Frank Ridley inherited in 1849.

²¹ Laird, *Rotherwood*, 9-10.

²² James River Institute for Archaeology, Inc., *Archaeological Investigations at Rotherwood*, 6.

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until 1966 when Sara Rawlings Jones died, leaving the property to her husband, Darden W. Jones.²³

Darden W. Jones worked as a dentist in the town of Franklin for 45 years and was a prominent member of the community, serving on boards and holding leadership roles in various local social, business, and charitable organizations, and operating a 700-acre farm at Rotherwood. In 1946, Jones was elected to the City Council and served in this position for 28 years. While living at Rotherwood, Jones was elected as Mayor of Franklin in 1957, a position he held until 1974. During his tenure as Mayor, Jones significantly contributed to the growth and renewal of Franklin, including the town's transition to a city through annexation in 1960. Included in his robust list of accomplishments during his time as Mayor are: the formation of a Redevelopment and Housing Authority, development of a comprehensive plan, and providing assistance in the establishment of various civic, institutional, and commercial developments including Paul D. Camp Community College and the Oak Street Community Center. Jones was selected as First Citizen of Franklin in 1973 "for his humanitarian, civic, and professional contributions to his community."²⁴

Criterion A: Agriculture

Rotherwood is eligible for listing on the National Register under **Criterion A: Agriculture** at the local level of significance for its association with broad patterns of agricultural history of Southampton County from the early nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth century. Rotherwood served as a plantation as early as 1809, when Thomas Ridley, a Revolutionary War Colonel, identified the property in his will. During the nineteenth century, more than 100 enslaved persons provided agricultural labor and cultivated the crops that contributed to the financial success of the Ridley family and the economic growth of the county. In addition to cultivation of staple cash crops, Rotherwood profited from livestock as well as timber. As with many other farms in Southampton County, agriculture at Rotherwood was able to persist in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries through a change in techniques, technologies, and crops. Practices such as tenant farming and leasing land preserved the undivided and profitable land. Increased mechanization in the early-to-mid-twentieth century also significantly contributed to the agricultural boom experienced throughout Southampton County, as did the success of crops such as peanuts and soybeans.²⁵

Rotherwood was transferred to Darden W. Jones, Farms, Inc., the current owner of record, in 1993, and, as of this writing, continues to be used as an operational agricultural estate. The property also conveys the evolution of agricultural outbuildings used for various purposes,

²³ Laird, *Rotherwood*, 7.

²⁴ "Darden W. Jones," Southampton-Nansemond County Virginia USGenWeb Archives Obituaries (2000). Accessed August 18, 2022. <http://files.usgwarchives.net/va/southampton/obits/j520d5ob.txt>.

²⁵ "Comprehensive History," Southampton County, Virginia. Accessed August 15, 2022. https://www.southamptoncounty.org/i_want_to/history/comprehensive_history.php

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including at least one early nineteenth century outbuilding. The other remaining outbuildings illustrate the evolution of twentieth century agricultural technology from early twentieth century storage barns to mid-to-late twentieth century grain bins and machine sheds. The continued agricultural use of the property has preserved its rural agricultural setting

Criterion A and Criterion D: African-American History and Archaeology

Rotherwood is also eligible for listing under Criterion A and Criterion D in the area of Ethnic Heritage: Black (African-American) for its association with the enslaved African Americans, as well as recent Freedmen who lived and worked on the property during the nineteenth century. By 1860, enslaved African Americans made up approximately 48 percent of Southampton County’s population. Documentation and extant resources associated with this population, however, remain rare. Therefore, the documentation that exists on the enslaved persons at Rotherwood offers a rare opportunity to better understand the history of African Americans in Southampton County. In addition to the named enslaved persons in the Ridley family probate records, the Virginia Death Records Index lists several named individuals, as well as their next-of-kin.

Name	Sex	Age	Death Date	Cause of Death	Relation
Charles	M	70	November 1853	None given	None given
Unnamed	F	1 day	June 1856	None given	Ritter (father)
Abner	M	2 months	August 1856	Whooping cough	Ritter (father)
Henry	M	1 month	August 1856	Whooping cough	Naney (mother)
Unnamed	F	1 day	September 1856	None given	Fanny (mother)
Unnamed	M	7 days	November 1856	None given	Cynthia (mother)
Patty	F	90	December 1857	Brain fever (Encephalitis or Meningitis)	None given
Tom	M	None given	July 1858	None given	Rachel (mother)
Moses	M	80	August 1859	Old age	None given
Eliza	F	20	January 1861	Pneumonia	Mary (mother)
Cornelia	F	2	March 1861	None given	Clara (mother)
Patty	F	65	May 1861	Pneumonia	None given
Jack	M	60	May 1861	Pneumonia	None given
Paul	M	1	May 1861	Dropsy (Edema)	Jenny (mother)
Fanny	F	1.5	June 1861	Diarrhea	Nancy (mother)
Unnamed	F	10 days	July 1861	None given	Cynthia (mother)
Lon	M	65	October 1861	Gravel (Kidney stones)	None given
Hulda	F	60	May 1862	None given	None given
Anna	F	4 months	June 1862	Brain fever (Encephalitis or Meningitis)	Nurin (mother)
Mason	M	15 days	November 1862	None given	Lydia (mother)
Malinda	F	7 months	December 1862	None given	Justin (father)

Figure 1: Enslaved African Americans Deceased at Rotherwood, 1853-1862, Courtesy of James River Institute for Archaeology

Rotherwood is also eligible under Criterion D for Archaeology for its potential to yield important additional information relating to the property’s history as an agricultural estate and the enslaved

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laborers that lived and worked on the property. Future field investigations and professional testing of the property's extensive acreage may lead to the identification of additional associated historic resources. Based on available data potential archaeological findings may include locations former dwellings for enslaved people, demolished agricultural outbuildings, and a burial site for enslaved African Americans and/or white Ridley family members.

In December 2010 and February 2011, James River Institute for Archaeology, Inc. (JRIA) conducted archaeological investigations of the area surrounding the main house and of the "South Field." Their investigations of the main house provided indications of historic landscaping activities but did not yield significant evidence of below-ground cultural features, and JRIA recommended conducting a ground-penetrating radar (GPR) survey with future study. In the South Field, however, JRIA collected and recorded 527 surface artifacts dating from the late-eighteenth century through the nineteenth century. Based on the concentration and patterning of the artifacts, JRIA suggests that this represented the location of Rotherwood's former plantation slave quarters. Their report explains that this location is consistent with slave quarters on contemporary plantations, and this finding aligns with the documentary evidence that records a high number of enslaved African Americans at Rotherwood during the nineteenth century. Additionally, documentary and archaeological evidence indicates that these quarters continued to be occupied by former enslaved African Americans for a period after Emancipation. JRIA recommended that more extensive archaeological testing be done of the South Field for its potential to yield significant additional information relating to the history of African Americans at Rotherwood. Based on their findings, JRIA found that the archaeological component of Rotherwood retains sufficient integrity and research potential to contribute to the property's National Register eligibility.²⁶

Criterion C: Architecture

Rotherwood is locally significant under Criterion C for Architecture for its collection of nineteenth and twentieth vernacular farm buildings, as well as the Greek Revival style plantation house. The property reflects both a formal plantation and the vernacular-built environment of its rural landscape.

Rotherwood's main house is an excellent example of an evolved vernacular dwelling with Greek Revival influences. Typical features of the style present include its symmetrical façade, low-pitched hipped roof, one-bay entry portico with Doric columns and a full entablature. Contrary to the more common examples of the Greek Revival style throughout Virginia, which largely include high-style representations emphasizing stone, stucco, and masonry elements, temple-front porticos, and elaborate molding profiles, Rotherwood represents a more modest vernacular design with its emphasis on simple wood-frame design with wood weatherboard siding, wood-framed windows, and a wood-frame entry surround. Overall, the design details are subdued and

²⁶ James River Institute for Archaeology, Inc., *Archaeological Investigations at Rotherwood*.

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differ from the highly-stylized examples seen more commonly throughout the region. The design and materials of the house reflect the rural landscape in its use of available natural materials.

Although the farm originally contained as many as twelve outbuildings, including a detached kitchen and additional barns that are no longer extant, the property still retains a critical portion of the resources associated with the historic Rotherwood. The buildings and structures on the property largely retain their physical elements associated with their original design, including the general architectural features, form, and limited stylized elements. Although some building components have been altered or have deteriorated, the buildings also largely retain their original historic materials. The oldest extant outbuilding on the property likely dates to the first quarter of the nineteenth century based on its hewn and sash sawn framing members, log floor joists, and beaded weatherboard siding fixed with rose head nails. Several elements of the building including the remaining beaded weatherboard (which appears to have been whitewashed), beaded ceiling joists, and enclosed corner stair suggest that it may have served a more formal purpose.²⁷ Although Outbuilding 1 has been re-roofed and modern drywall and/or plywood boards have been added to the interior, and though deteriorated, the framing and finishes convey its early craftsmanship. The building is a rare surviving early nineteenth century vernacular agricultural building in Southampton County, and therefore, it contributes greatly to the architectural significance of Rotherwood.

²⁷ Additional archaeological and/or architectural investigation is necessary to determine if the building may have previously served as a dwelling or secondary dwelling. No chimney was observed during the site visit, and it is unlikely that a dwelling would have lacked a heating source.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Carson, Cary, and Carl R. Lounsbury. *The Chesapeake House*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2013.

“Comprehensive History.” Southampton County, Virginia.

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Cropper, John. “List of original members of the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Virginia.” Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Virginia. Richmond: The Society, 1896. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcmassbookdig.listoforiginalme00soci/?st=gallery>

“Darden W. Jones.” Southampton-Nansemond County Virginia USGenWeb Archives Obituaries. (2000). <http://files.usgwarchives.net/va/southampton/obits/j520d5ob.txt>.

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Lewis, Henry W. *Southampton Riddles and their kin*. Chapel Hill, NC: Private Publisher, 1961. <https://archive.org/details/southamptonridle00lewi/page/n73/mode/2up>.

The Ottery Group, Inc. “Historic Structures Survey of Southampton County, Virginia.” For the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. Silver Spring, MD: The Ottery Group, Inc., May 2008.

U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1850 U.S. Federal Census – Slave Schedules*, Ancestry.com
1860 U.S. Federal Census – Slave Schedules, Ancestry.com.

Will, Thomas Ridley, 1809, Southampton County Probate Records, Ancestry.com

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 # _____

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___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
___ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

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

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DHR #087-0045

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 58

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- Latitude: 36.70174 Longitude: -77.24367
- Latitude: 36.70173 Longitude: -77.23844
- Latitude: 36.69520 Longitude: -77.23847
- Latitude: 36.69519 Longitude: -77.24365

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- Zone: Easting: Northing:
- Zone: Easting: Northing:

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3. Zone: Easting: Northing:

4. Zone: Easting : Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Rotherwood encompasses 58 acres of the 191-acre parcel. The boundary of the historic property is bounded on the north by Southampton Parkway, the gravel road of the main house south along the treeline to the wooded area south of the South Field, and roughly follows the western parcel line. The boundary is also shown on the attached sketch maps.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The Rotherwood boundary encompasses the primary historic core of the nineteenth century Ridley plantation and includes all of its historic agricultural outbuildings and known archaeological sites associated with enslaved African Americans. Areas of the current parcel boundary that are excluded from the historic property boundary have been farmed in recent years using modern technologies or are the location of residences not associated with the historic Rotherwood plantation. Additionally, the parcel has been divided by modern road construction, that is not associated with the significance of Rotherwood. The property's historic setting and all known associated historic resources have been included within the historic boundary.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Kayla Halberg, Victoria Leonard, Ashlen Stump
organization: Commonwealth Preservation Group
street & number: 536 W 35th Street
city or town: Norfolk state: VA zip code: 23508
e-mail: admin@commonwealthpreservationgroup.com
telephone: 757-923-1900
date: September 26, 2022

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Rotherwood

City or Vicinity: Capron

County: Southampton State: VA

Photographer: Kayla Halberg

Date Photographed: April 2022

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo Number of 42	Description	View/Direction
1	Façade/East elevation of Main House	W
2	Façade and South elevation oblique	NW
3	South elevation	N
4	Detail of Portico and Main Entrance	W
5	Detail south entrance	N
6	Rear/West elevation of Main House	E
7	North elevation	S
8	First Floor, Central Hall	W
9	First Floor, Central Hall, Facing Front Entrance	E
10	First Floor Stair Detail	SW
11	First Floor Parlor	N
12	First Floor Living Room	S
13	First Floor Living Room, Fireplace Detail	S
14	First Floor Dining Room	S
15	Second Floor Stair Landing and Hall	W
16	Second Floor South Bedroom	S
17	View of Outbuildings	N

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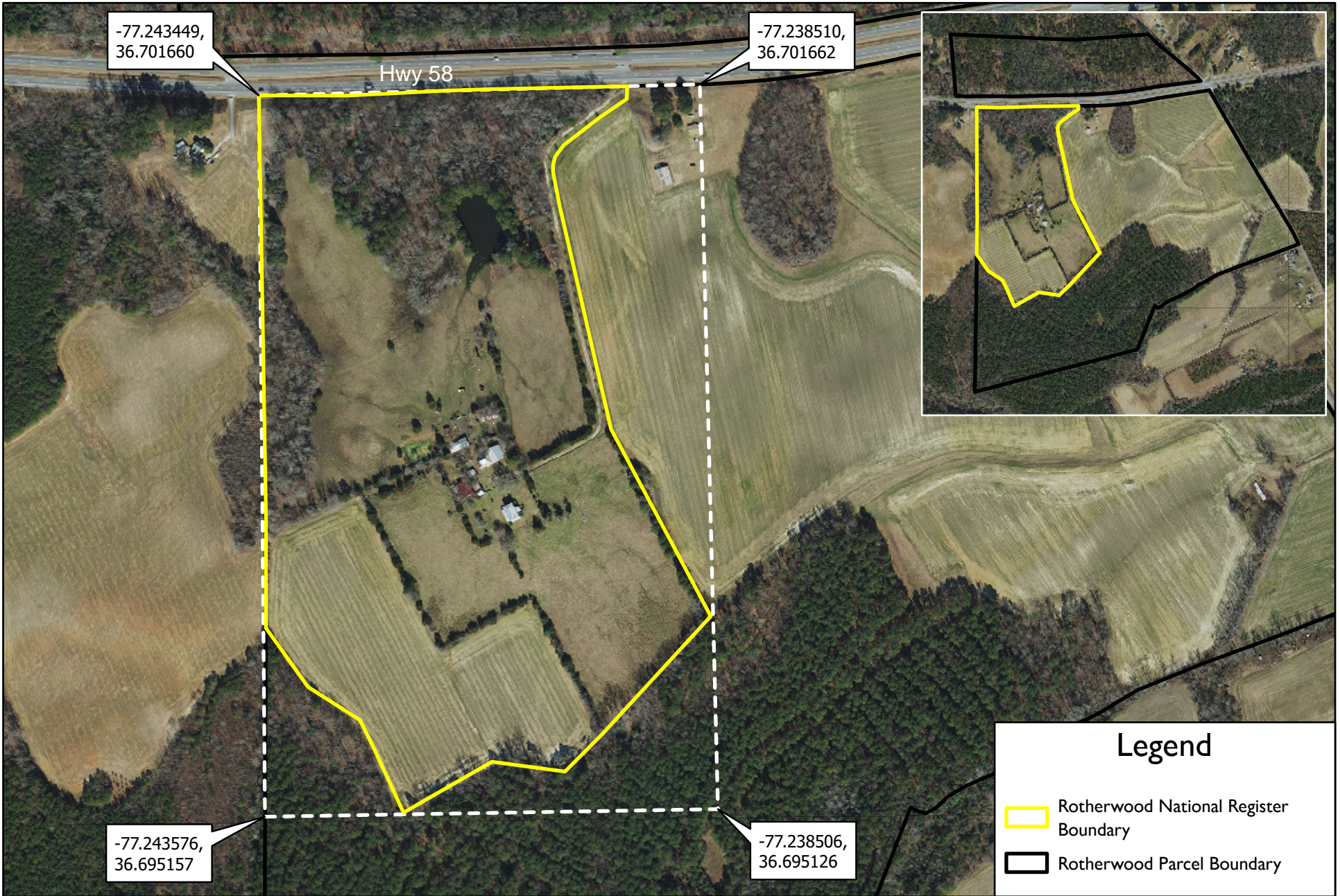
Photo Number of 42	Description	View/Direction
18	View of Outbuildings	S
19	Shed and Lean-to	W
20	Well and front yard	SE
21	Machine Shed	W
22	Outbuilding 1, South and East Elevation Oblique	NW
23	Outbuilding 1, West Elevation	E
24	Outbuilding 1, North and West Elevation Oblique	SE
25	Outbuilding 1, SW Corner Detail	NE
26	Outbuilding 1, Shed roof addition rafter detail	S
27	Outbuilding 1, South elevation detail	N
28	Outbuilding 1, Beaded weatherboard detail	N
29	Outbuilding 1, Foundation Detail	S
30	Outbuilding 1, Door detail	S
31	Outbuilding 1, Ceiling Detail	N
32	Outbuilding 1, Interior West Elevation and Stair Detail	W
33	Outbuilding 1, Stair Detail	W
34	Outbuilding 1, Stair Detail	N
35	Pole Barn	N
36	Pole Barn North Elevation	S
37	Barn South Elevation	N
38	Barn East Elevation	W
39	Corrugated Metal Shed	SW
40	Metal Grain Bins	E
41	Bell Pole	SW

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations 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.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.



Legend

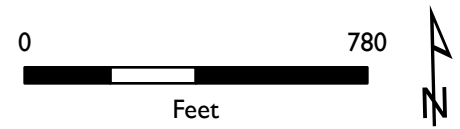
- Rotherwood National Register Boundary
- Rotherwood Parcel Boundary

Location Map

Prepared with ArcGIS by CPG 2022

Rotherwood

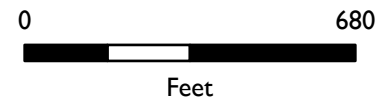
15410 Southampton Parkway
 Capron, Southampton, Virginia
 087-0045





**Sketch Map/
Overview**

Rotherwood
15410 Southampton Parkway
Capron, Southampton, Virginia
087-0045



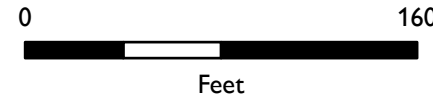
Resource Inventory

- A. Main House, c.1851-52, C
- B. Outbuilding 1, c.1820, C
- C. Well, c.1950, C
- D. Shed, c.1900, C
- E. Lean-To, c.1990, NC
- F. Metal Machine Shed, c.1970, C
- G. Pole Barn, c.1970, C
- H. Barn, 1950/2007, NC
- I. Corrugated Metal Shed, c.1950, C
- J. Metal Grain Bin, c. 1970, C
- K. Metal Grain Bin, c. 1970, C
- L. Metal Grain Bin, c. 1970, C
- M. Bell Pole, c.1980, NC



**Sketch Map/
Architectural Resources**

Rotherwood
15410 Southampton Parkway
Capron, Southampton, Virginia
087-0045



Resource Inventory

- A. Main House, c.1851-52, C
- B. Outbuilding 1, c.1820, C
- C. Well, c.1950, C
- D. Shed, c.1900, C
- E. Lean-To, c.1990, NC
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- I. Corrugated Metal Shed, c.1950, C
- J. Metal Grain Bin, c. 1970, C
- K. Metal Grain Bin, c. 1970, C
- L. Metal Grain Bin, c. 1970, C
- M. Bell Pole, c.1980, NC



**Sketch Map/
Architectural Resources
& Photo Key**

Rotherwood
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