



7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Federal Hill overlooks old Fredericksburg from a small hill at what was once the western edge of the town. It originally was a large farm; today, however, it is a small plot of land with a large house and a gazebo set in a well-kept garden, sandwiched between a church and a factory.

Traditionally dated to the early-eighteenth century, the house at Federal Hill was probably built, judging from the architectural evidence, in the 1780's. At any rate, according to the Mutual Assurance Society policies on the house, it existed in its present form by 1796. It is a long, two-and-one-half-story frame, brick-nogged building sheathed with beaded weatherboards and covered by a gable roof with a modillion cornice. Five gable-roofed dormers with diagonal flush siding light the east slope, and four the west. A brick interior chimney is at either end of the house; the one on the north side is exposed as a tall, flush, Flemish-bond brick panel up to the level of the eaves. The house is underpinned with a Flemish-bond brick foundation.

The west, or main, front is accented by a central pedimented pavilion. A recessed fanlight door with molded archivolt and keyblock breaks into a broad, shallow pediment which shelters the doors and its flanking sidelights. These sidelights are bracketed by slender colonettes which rest on a square dado and which, in turn, support the pediment's pulvinated frieze. At the pavilion's second-floor level the doorway motif is repeated by a central window flanked by two narrow, detached windows. An interesting coursed-rubble porch supported by a well-crafted arch with keystone leads to the front door. Under the easternmost first-floor window is a later brick bulkhead with a gable-roof and modillion cornice.

The east side of Federal Hill has no true pavilion, but the central bay is flanked by two colossal, highly attenuated pilasters. The three-part theme of the west facade is used again, but the main door has only a simple four-light transom and architrave frame, and no pediments of any kind are used on this elevation. The principal feature of this side of the house is its striking balcony with turned balusters. Supported on four girts running the full depth of the house, this balcony, which was shown on the earliest Mutual policies, had been removed and replaced by a two-story porch in the nineteenth century. The present owners found it carefully packed in a crate stored in the house, and they replaced it. A door at the second-floor level, directly over the entrance door, opens on to the balcony.

All of the windows on both sides of the house have nine-over-nine sash on the first floor, nine-over-six sash on the second, and smaller nine-over-six sash in the dormers. Except for the dormer windows, they all have architrave frames and louvered blinds as well.

At an early date, a frame wing was added to the south end of the house. It is presently two stories high, but its evolution is uncertain and accounts of its history conflict.

The house has a simple plan. A central hall with the stairs in the north-east corner leads to a parlor and a dining room on the south side and a

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Federal Hill, the ancestral home of two prominent mid-nineteenth century figures, is an uncommonly grand and remarkably well-preserved specimen of a late-eighteenth-century Tidewater Virginia country house. Though it is now a town house, Federal Hill was built as the residence of a spacious farm located, in the words of a 1796 insurance policy, "on the Suburbs of Fredericksburg." Its large ballroom and elaborate dining room are two of Virginia's most impressive eighteenth-century rooms and are distinctive for their mixing of late colonial and Federal detailing.

While many elements in its design, notably its center-hall plan and its heavily proportioned trim, recall mid-eighteenth-century woodwork, Federal Hill, in its use of molded panels, reeded chair rails, and Adamesque detail such as that in the dining room, also looks forward to the work of the turn of the next decade. In many cases, incongruous combinations occur, such as the use of doors which have earlier-type raised panels on one side and molded panels on the other. This same kind of mixing also occurs in other houses of the penultimate decade of the eighteenth century like the John Brown House in Providence, Rhode Island.

Although local tradition claims a much earlier date, Federal Hill was probably built by Robert Brooke, governor of Virginia from 1794-1796. Brooke sold the house sometime between 1796, when he insured it with the Mutual Assurance Society for \$5000, and 1805, when it was insured for \$7000 by Thomas Reed Rootes, a lawyer from Fredericksburg. In 1815, it was re-valued at \$6500, with a wing, shown on the earlier policies, missing and with the balcony replaced by an eight-foot by fifteen-foot porch. At that time, no one was living in the house, Rootes having moved his family to Gloucester County.

Rootes' daughter Sarah was married at Federal Hill to John Cobb. Their son Major General Howell Cobb was a United States Senator from Georgia as well as President James Buchanan's secretary of the Treasury. Another son, Major General Thomas R. R. Cobb, was killed during the Civil War at the Battle of Fredericksburg. It was during this time, also, that the house was used as a field hospital by the Army of the Potomac.

The subsequent history of Federal Hill's ownership is unclear. The house was allowed to deteriorate until it was purchased and restored by the present owner, Mrs. Richard Lanier, and her late husband. It was at this time that the original balcony was discovered stored in the house and replaced.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Ashton, Betty Parker, "History, Politics, Legend Surround Old Federal Hill," Richmond Times-Dispatch, Richmond, Va., April 17, 1968.

Goolrick, John T. Old Homes and History Around Fredericksburg. Richmond: Garrett and Massie, Inc., 1929.

Smith, Marie, "Mansion Claims Famous Ghost," The Washington Post and Times Herald, Washington, D. C., April 22, 1956.

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Archives.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "		38°	18'	00"
NE	° ' "	° ' "		77°	27'	46"
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than one acre

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION:  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE:  
November 1974

STREET AND NUMBER:  
221 Governor Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Richmond

STATE:  
Virginia

CODE:  
51

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

National  State  Local

Name: Junius R. Fishburne, Jr.  
Junius R. Fishburne, Jr., Exec. Director  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission  
 Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: NOV 19 1974

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: 3/26/75

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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

(Continuation Sheet) #1

STATE	
Virginia	
COUNTY	
Fredericksburg (in City)	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

(2) Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory

1957                      Federal

Library of Congress

Washington, D. C.      (code: 11)

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) #2

STATE	
Virginia	
COUNTY	
Fredericksburg (in City)	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

7. DESCRIPTION (Continued)

large ballroom on the north. A door in the dining room opens into the wing. The ballroom is by far the most elaborate room in the house. The focal point is the long end wall of the house, with its high chimney breast and arched alcoves. A gray marble fireplace surround is enclosed by a simple architrave frame. Above this, two consoles support a mantel shelf with a denticulated cornice broken around a central paneled tablet. A long, low panel with double crossettes sits upon this shelf and, in turn, supports another pair of consoles surmounted by a swan's neck pediment. The whole arrangement is framed by a pair of fluted Doric pilasters the height of the room. Broad arches, sprung from molded impost blocks, screen the recesses on either side of the projecting chimney face. The pilasters are repeated at intervals around the room, including a pair placed on its long axis; the pilasters are applied over a flush wainscot with reeded chair rail and support a full entablature with denticulated cornice. Opposite the chimney piece, the door to the stair hall is framed by an architrave molding; over it, consoles support a broken triangular pediment. To either side are pilasters, and the whole area is flush-wainscoted up to the cornice, rather than just to the chair rail.

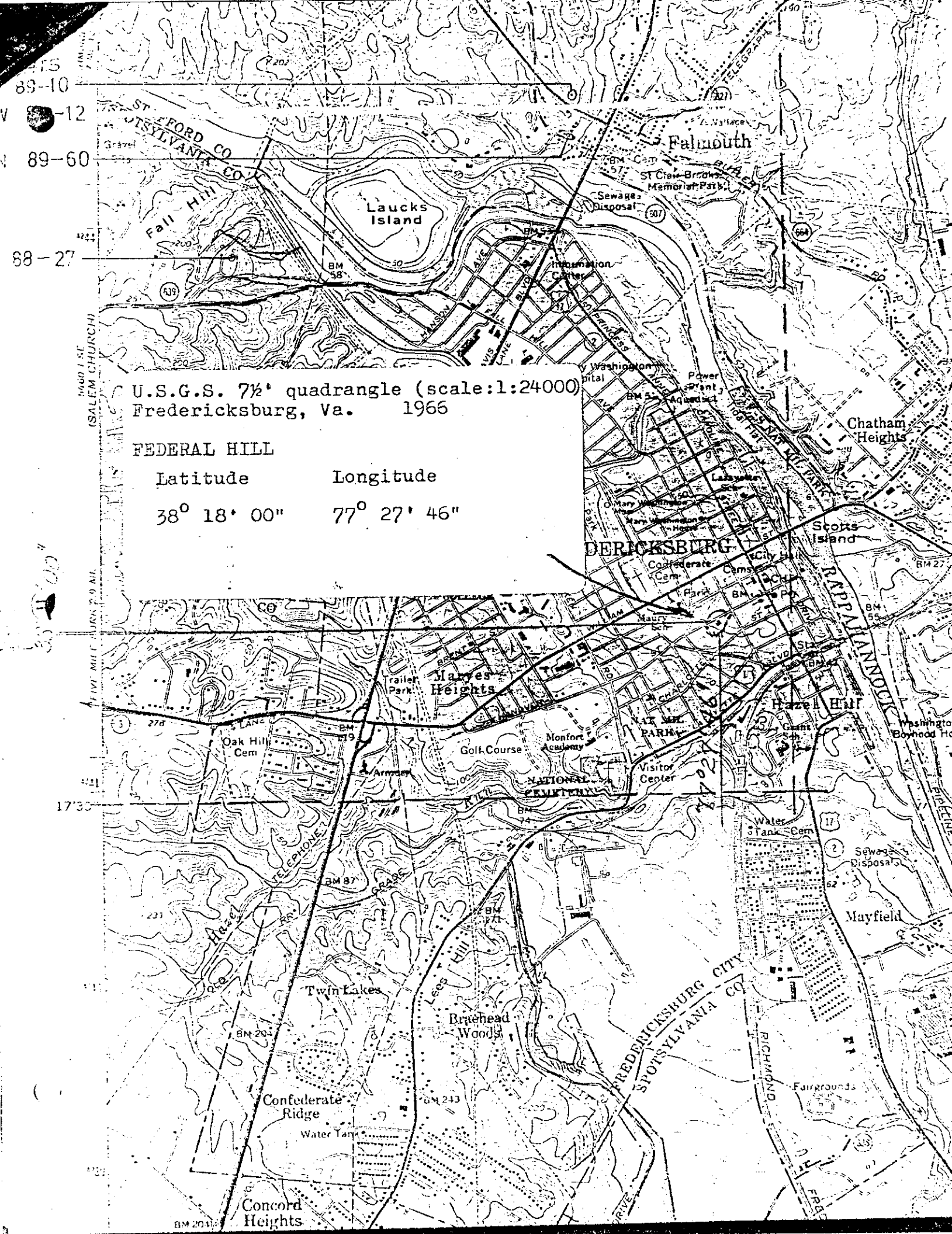
The central passage is wainscoted all around and features a molded chair rail and a cavetto cornice. Its stairs are made entirely of mahogany--an extremely lavish use of that wood at such an early date. The stair's soffit is paneled with molded panels. The front doorway is treated in an unusual manner: over the door, which is set flush with the inside wall, is an elongated fanlight consisting of a semicircular fanlight with an uncommon mullion design superimposed on a rectangular transom light. Flush with the outside wall is a fan louvre, fixed so that the whole window is visible from the inside, but so that only the transom lights and the louvre are visible from the outside.

The parlor is decorated on the chimney wall with molded paneling. A fireplace treatment composed of a marble surround and a mantel with paneled pilasters below a reeded architrave, plain frieze and H-fret cornice highlights this end of the room. The other three sides are wainscoted with molded panels and a reeded chair rail. An Adamesque flute-and-rosette cornice encircles the room, and the same design is also used in the friezes of the door's and windows' full entablatures. The rosettes are made of lead.

The dining room is treated in a similar manner. Again, molded-panel wainscoting is used. The chair rail and cornice here are of the punch-and-dentil variety. The door and window entablatures have lattice-work friezes. The paneled room end, with its simple mantel, is embellished by an elaborate over-mantel panel with double crossettes and a Greek-fret border. This is surrounded by carved guilloche and garland ornamentation.

An early frame octagonal gazebo with an ogee roof and crowning finial stands in the garden.

DTU



U.S.G.S. 7½' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)  
 Fredericksburg, Va. 1966

FEDERAL HILL

Latitude	Longitude
38° 18' 00"	77° 27' 46"

89-10  
 89-12  
 89-60  
 88-27

5600 1 S.E.  
 (SALEM CHURCH)

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 (SALEM CHURCH)

1730

5600 1 S.E.  
 (SALEM CHURCH)

5600 1 S.E.  
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