

VLR-3/2/71 NRHP-6/26/72

Form 10-200
(July 1959)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries complete applicable sections)

STATE: Virginia	
COUNTY: Rockbridge	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER:	DATE: 6/26/72

1. NAME

COMMON:
Lexington Historic District

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Lexington Historic District

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
See continuation sheet

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE: Virginia CODE: 51 COUNTY: Rockbridge CODE: 163

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Various owners - public and private

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Lexington STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Rockbridge County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Lexington STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1934 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: D. C. CODE: 11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Virginia
COUNTY: Rockbridge
ENTRY NUMBER:
DATE:
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7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The City of Lexington is located in the Valley of Virginia at the center of Rockbridge County. The Lexington Preservation District includes most of the northern end and a good deal of the central portion of town. The topography of the land within the district consists of a broad plateau at the south end that narrows and curves to the northeast as a ridge being flattened on top. The slopes on three of the four sides are caused either by the Maury River to the north or by its tributaries to the east or west of the district. The town serves as the crossroads for Route 60 (Nelson Street) running east-west and Route 11 (Main Street) which runs down the Valley.

The northern half of the district is almost entirely devoted to the college-owned buildings or college campus buildings of Washington and Lee University and the Virginia Military Institute. The designs of the two schools, are as different as are their methods of instruction. The military life of VMI is well expressed in the castellated designs by architect, A. J. Davis, for the barracks and residences that surround the expansive parade ground. The school continues the styles set by the four-story stuccoed barracks with their towers and crenellations. The traditional qualities of W & L student life can be seen in Washington Hall, the central red brick block and white stuccoed portico begun by John Jordon in 1823, with its flanking wings and dependency additions. Just below the south end of the line of buildings stands the Lee Chapel, where General Lee was buried in 1870; this Romanesque structure was completed in 1868 and was recently restored. This impressive range of brick structures faces onto a broad green sward with Letcher Avenue below. This avenue, which begins at the entrance to the W & L campus and ends at the VMI parade grounds, is lined with brick and frame residential buildings utilizing a variety of porch designs.

The commercial area of the Preservation District occupies the middle blocks of Main Street as well as portions of two parallel streets (Randolph and Jefferson Streets). Included in this area are several brick rows which range in age from the early nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. The heaviest concentration of brick three-story buildings with gable roofs occurs between Washington and Henry Streets on Main Street; especially fine is the circa 1790 Alexander Withrow House at the northwest corner of Washington and Main Streets with its glazed brick diaper work, three-story facade and bracketed cornice. All of the older buildings on Main Street have their basements largely exposed due to street grading and adjustments for storefronts have been made accordingly. Several churches remain on Main Street: with the most significant being the Lexington Presbyterian Church, a massive Greek Revival structure built in 1843 at the intersection with Nelson Street. Also in this area is the brick, two-story Court House set back from the street with flanking offices for lawyers and professional people; these offices create a secluded courtyard in the heart of the commercial area.

The remaining portions of the district are devoted to residential buildings of which there are several general types. Stone, built by Jordon in 1818, stands at the northernmost point of the district and was designed in the temple front form similar to Eppington, Chesterfield County

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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Virginia	
COUNTY	
Rockbridge	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

7. Continued

and the Semple House, Williamsburg. The examples of the "Picturesque Cottage" are built in either brick or board and batten with steep cross gable roofs and carpenters' scrollwork. Two fine brick cottages are the Presbyterian Manse at 6 White Street with another near the corner of Jefferson and McDowell Streets; a superb board and batten cottage stands below the parade grounds on Letcher Avenue and another is on the south side of Jordan Street. There are a number of mid- and late-nineteenth-century brick houses with irregular plans and low pitched roofs; several are located around the south end of Main Street. Larger versions of these structures stand on the west side of the 100 block of Lee Avenue in an area notable for its broad, shaded lawns and white columned, one and two story porches set against red Brick walls.

The corner of Washington and Randolph Street has two interesting brick structures diagonally across the street from each other. Stonewall Jackson's House and Halestones are both early-nineteenth-century two story buildings which have had pilasters and pediments added. Just next to Halestones is the Castle, supposedly the oldest structure in the city but whose stonework has been covered by pebble-point stucco. Lexington has a considerable number of late-nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century frame houses allude to the Queen Anne or Colonial Revival tastes,

2. Bounded on the north by the southwestern tributary of Maury River and the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, bounded on the south by Edmondson Avenue, extending to the east 800 feet east of Randolph St., bounded on the west by the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad.

6. Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory
1965 Federal
Library of Congress
Washington, D. C. 20540

3. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-historic | <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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The area of the Valley of Virginia lying within present day Rockbridge County (created 1778) was a Scotch-Irish, Presbyterian settlement. Lexington, the county seat of Rockbridge, has been the Valley's center of educational interest and activity since the later-eighteenth century.

"Few finer subjects can be found for an artist's pencil than the well built village," opined a late-ante-bellum visitor: Lexington with her "long, graceful crescent of hills, topped with handsome private residences, a fine Female Academy, the colonnade of Washington College, and the castle-like Military Institute, with the Jump, North, and House Mountains as a background, and in the intertwining forests the ivy-covered ruin of 'Liberty Hall Academy.'" Physical charm, the continuing presence of the South's greatest hero, and the long-time, organic ties of town and gown combine to make of Washington and Lee the historic and aesthetic center of Lexington.

The Presbyterian Manse and Greek Revival Church, The Virginia Military Institute, and the Stonewall Jackson Hospital and cemetery combine to remind visitor and native alike of the individual who came closest to personifying the social and cultural traditions of Lexington. In 1851 Thomas Jonathan Jackson came to join the faculty of Virginia Military; in 1863 his body was brought back from Chancellorsville. In the intervening years, he had become an integral member of the community; his tomb, like that of his Captain's, is in Lexington.

The inherent conservatism, which led Union-loving Lexington to embrace secession in 1861, is reflected in the conservative style of the modern community. The economy is built around two schools which have developed without growing precipitately. The beautiful setting of the Valley, indeed the overall aesthetic impression of Lexington, is not essentially changed since the later-nineteenth century. Recent commercial development has occurred to the east, between the town limits and Interstate 81, rather than downtown. Lexington has in abundance -- if in fragile equilibrium -- what other communities aspire to; she is what other Valley towns were thirty years ago.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Boley, Henry, Lexington in Old Virginia, 1936.
 Crenshaw, Ollinger, General Lee's College, 1969.
 Morton, Oren F., A History of Rockbridge County Virginia, 1920.
Proceedings of the Rockbridge County Historical Society (title varies),
 7 vols. to date, passim.
 Tompkins, E. P., Rockbridge County, Virginia: An Informal History, 1952.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	37 ° 47' 35"	79 ° 27' 05"				
NE	37 ° 47' 35"	79 ° 25' 45"				
SE	37 ° 46' 42"	79 ° 25' 45"				
SW	37 ° 46' 42"	79 ° 27' 05"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 600 acres

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

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

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
 Staff, Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, James W. Moody, Jr., Director

ORGANIZATION: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE: January 4, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER:
 Room 1116, Ninth Street Office Building

CITY OR TOWN: Richmond

STATE: Virginia

CODE: 51

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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

National State Local

Name _____

Dr. Edward P. Alexander, Chairman
 Title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

Date 3/2/71

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

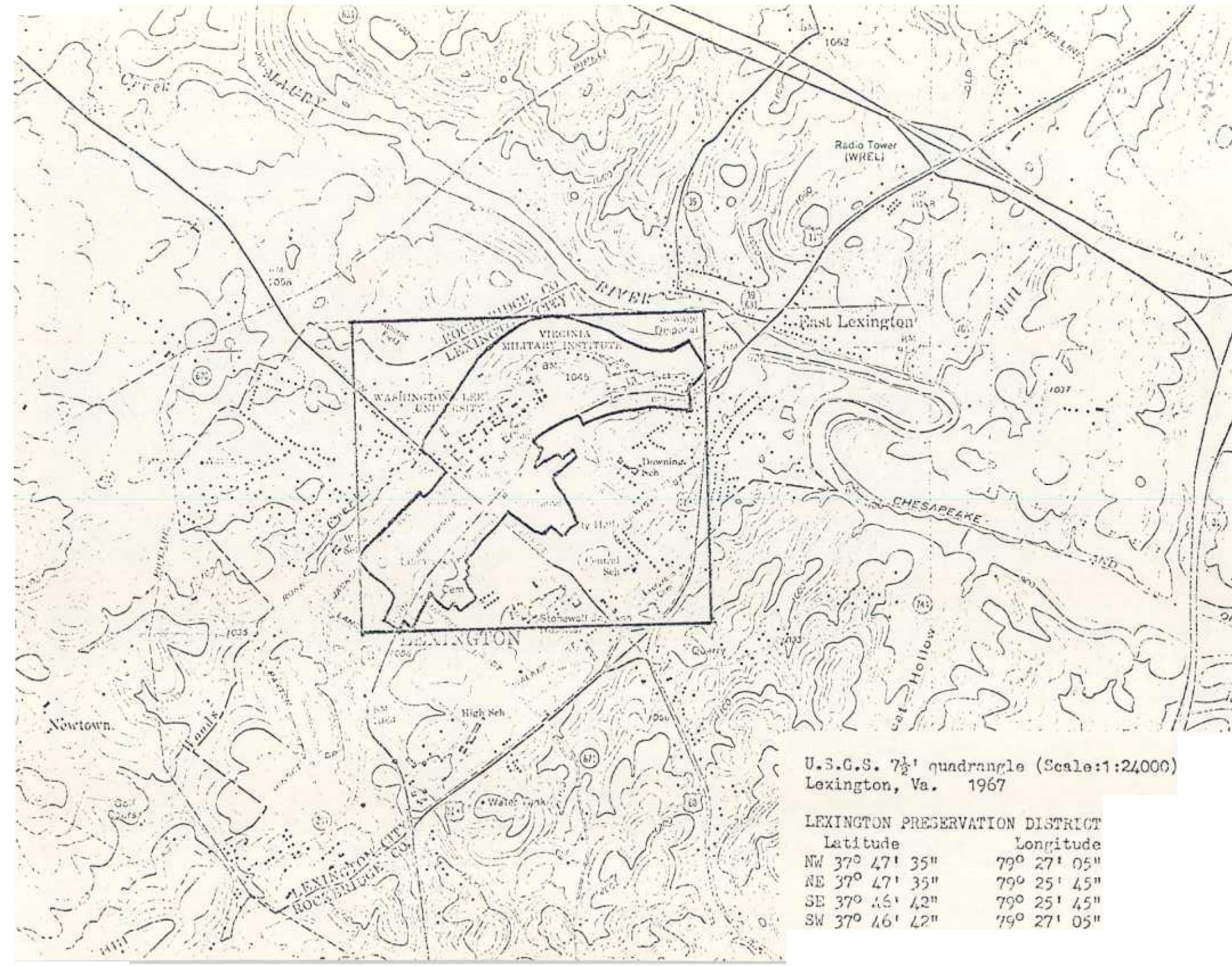
Date _____

ATTEST:

 Keeper of The National Register

Date 6/26/72

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



U.S.G.S. 7½' quadrangle (Scale:1:24000)
 Lexington, Va. 1967

LEXINGTON PRESERVATION DISTRICT

Latitude	Longitude
NW 37° 47' 35"	79° 27' 05"
NE 37° 47' 35"	79° 25' 45"
SE 37° 46' 42"	79° 25' 45"
SW 37° 46' 42"	79° 27' 05"