

VLR-12/2/69, NRHP-2/26/70

Form 10-300  
(July 1969)

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: Accomack	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Wessells Root Cellar

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Wessells Root Cellar

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
.3 mi. E of Rt. 701, .1 mi. N of intersection with Rt. 692.

CITY OR TOWN:  
(Hallwood vic.)

STATE Virginia	CODE 45	COUNTY: Accomack	CODE 001
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**CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Storage</u>

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
Mr. H. L. Wessells

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Route 701

CITY OR TOWN:  
Hallwood

STATE: Virginia	CODE 45
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**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

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

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
Accomack

STATE Virginia	CODE 45
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**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Report #01-76

DATE OF SURVEY: 1969       Federal     State     County     Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building

CITY OR TOWN:  
Richmond

STATE: Virginia	CODE 45
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Virginia
COUNTY: Accomack
ENTRY NUMBER
DATE
FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins
	(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

The Wessells Root Cellar is a rectangular structure of brick covered by a steep gable roof with wood shingles. In the center of the roof is a small, brick stove chimney which is a later addition. The side walls of the building, which are approximately four feet in height from the ground level to the box cornice, are laid in Flemish bond with queen closers at the corners. A small window was cut in the west side wall at a later date. The building is entered on the south gable end through a doorway which is crowned by a segmental arch. As this doorway is partially below the ground level, one must descend several steps to enter. The wooden batten door, supported on large iron hinges, is quite old and may be original. The entrance has been covered by a small gable roof porch which apparently has been replaced more than once. The interior of the cellar is divided into a lower main space and a loft above. The lower level has a brick floor and is separated from the loft by joists which were originally exposed. The loft is reached by a loading window in the rear gable.

The outstanding architectural feature of the Wessells Root Cellar is the unusual and highly effective glazed header pattern in the front gable. The blueish headers appear as a series of stepped rows paralleling the pitch of the gable.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Archaeology</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input checked="" 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**

In 1768, William Vessells acquired one hundred acres of land on the edge of Michael Marsh from John and Rhoda Potter. It is believed that the Vessells began the construction of the small brick house soon after this acquisition, and it is probable that the root cellar, located a few feet behind the dwelling, was erected during the same period. Upon William Vessells' death in 1803, his wife Egnatia inherited "the small room in my (Vessells) dwelling house and the small chamber above and a Privilege of passing from one to the other through the house." Vessells' son Walter was left the remainder of the house as well as the 225 acre plantation, including the root cellar. The property has descended in the Wessells family and is still owned by them today.

Unfortunately the dwelling was destroyed by fire in 1937. It was replaced by a simple frame structure. The root cellar, however, has survived intact and still performs the function for which it was designed. Since colonial root cellars were usually contained in the foundations of other buildings, the Wessells Root Cellar is most unusual for being built as an individual structure to serve only the function of a root cellar. Furthermore, the sophisticated quality of the workmanship and materials in the cellar is rarely found in outbuildings of such secondary functional importance. These two factors combine to make the Wessells Root Cellar probably a unique example of its type, not only on the Eastern Shore, but in all of Virginia.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Whitelaw, Ralph T., Virginia's Eastern Shore. Volume II. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1968.

**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	0     '     "	0     '     "		37 ° 53 ' 55 "	75 ° 37 ' 35 "	
NE	0     '     "	0     '     "				
SE	0     '     "	0     '     "				
SW	0     '     "	0     '     "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than 10 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: November 13, 1969

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building

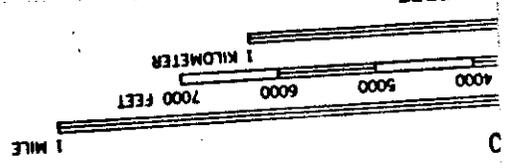
CITY OR TOWN: Richmond      STATE: Virginia      CODE: 45

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION      NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

<p>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:</p> <p>National <input type="checkbox"/>      State <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>      Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p><u>Dr. Edward P. Alexander, Chairman</u>          Title <u>Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission</u></p> <p>Date _____</p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p>_____  <i>Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</i></p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p>_____  <i>Keeper of The National Register</i></p> <p>Date _____</p>
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

ROAD CLASSIFICATION  
 Medium-duty ————  
 Light-duty - - - - -  
 Unimproved dirt .....



INTERIOR-GEOLOGICAL SURVEY WASHINGTON D. C. 1968  
 444900m E. 1900000

