

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Red Hill, an imposing Federal residence, is pleasantly sited on a hill off Route 647 near the village of Pedlar Mills in Amherst County. The brick 55' x 42', 2½-story house was built 1824-25. The present front (east) portico was added in 1932 and replaces a stylistically similar example. The building is executed in brick laid in a very even Flemish bond and is set on a brick foundation. A portion of the east wall sheltered by the portico shows evidence of penciled joints. The hip roof is covered with slate shingles. In addition to the removal of the original main portico, the rear (west) portico was removed at an unknown date in the 19th century. A one-story Doric columned porch, the length of the elevation, replaced it. This porch was removed by the present owner in the 1970s. Its replacement is presently in the design stage. The north and south walls each have two interior end chimneys.

The main (east) doorway has paneled double doors contained within a simply executed architrave. The door is a 20th-century replacement of a similar door. The architrave is flanked by sidelights and is topped by a blind transom. The transom is reeded and is capped by a lintel with turned corner blocks. The west doorway is similarly treated and retains its original paneled double doors. The north elevation has a twelve-pane glass and wood panel door installed during the present restoration. The simply executed architrave is topped by a lintel with turned corner blocks. The east and west elevations contain second-story doorways similar to those below. The doors have twelve-pane glass tops. Lintels with turned corner blocks rest on the simply executed architraves.

Fenestration consists of 6/6 hung-sash windows within simply executed architraves also topped by lintels with turned corner blocks. Basement windows of six-pane sash are similarly treated. A few basement windows retain their wooden diagonal bars. Most first- and second-story windows retain their louvred shutters held by iron hinges and hooks. The eaves course is embellished by a Doric cornice with mutules and dentils, portions of which have rotted out on the north elevation.

Red Hill contains a double-pile, central-hall plan. The hall is graced by an open-well stair, the design of which is inspired by Plates 31 and 35 of Owen Biddle's Young Carpenter's Assistant. Plate 35 includes instructions for the veneering of handrails. Along with its veneered handrail, the stair has paneled spandrels, a scrolled newel, scroll-sawn brackets, and square balusters. A number of iron balusters are used randomly for additional structural support. A secondary stair to the attic is found on the second floor in the southwest chamber and has a paneled spandrel, square newel, rounded handrail, and two square balusters to a tread. The house retains its original pine flooring. The walls and ceilings are plastered.

First- and second-floor doorways and windows are framed by symmetrical molded architraves with turned corner blocks. Secondary openings have simpler three-part architraves. Most of the original six-paneled doors survive throughout the house. Original cupboards and wardrobes on both floors feature finely paneled double doors. Evidence of the original painted graining has been found on a door frame. Most of the first-floor woodwork is presently covered with a dark stain. It is believed that the stain was applied over the original painted graining during the latter part of the 19th century. The house contains notable mantels that appear to have been part of the original interior trim. The mantel in the northeast parlor, consisting of paired columns supporting a Doric entablature, may have been influenced by a more elaborate example in Biddle's Young Carpenter's Assistant, Plate 22. A former first-floor mantel presently stored in the basement demonstrates an

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1824-5 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE Red Hill, originally the Ellis family homestead, is the finest Federal-style house in Amherst County. A formal country residence, the house was built from the profits of the family's mercantile interests both in the county and in Richmond. The quality and sophistication of the dwelling reflect the pervasive custom of early merchants to make significant investment in the construction and embellishment of their residences. The house shows the influence of Owen Biddle's 'The Young Carpenter's Assistant' of 1810, an architectural pattern book known to have been sold in Richmond and widely employed by master builders throughout the state. The Adamesque detailing, finely executed stair, and spacious plan suggest that the family was familiar with the fine residences being erected in Richmond and adapted their refined lines for their county residence.

Red Hill stands on land that had been in the Ellis family since the mid-18th century. Charles Ellis was the first of the family to live in Amherst County. He moved there from the eastern part of the state around 1754. He died in 1759 leaving his widow, Susannah, and several children including a son, Josiah. Susannah Ellis then married John Beckley, and a court decision in 1769 assigned him the dower rights of his new bride. Charles's son Josiah, born in 1746 in Henrico County, became heir to most of his father's property in Amherst, with the exception of 143 acres which was his mother's dower. Josiah remained in Amherst and was very active in the affairs of St. Luke's Church. He served as a delegate to the Diocesan Council from Pedlar Mills. In addition to his successful farming activities, he established a merchant mill at Pedlar Mills. He died intestate in 1810 leaving a substantial estate, including the acreage on which the present house stands.

Josiah's son, Charles, had gone to Richmond in the late 18th century and formed a partnership with John Allan (Allen), a leading merchant and foster parent of Edgar Allan Poe. The men served as brokers in the flour, tobacco and lumber markets and conducted other rental and retail operations. It was the success of Charles that enabled Richard S. Ellis to build a new house in Amherst County.

Richard Shelton Ellis, the third son of Josiah (b. 1775), remained in Amherst and inherited the Red Hill property. Richard operated the farming and mercantile operations of the Ellis family in Amherst and built the present Red Hill dwelling around 1824 to serve as his residence and as a summer home for his brother Charles. Sited on a hill, the house would have proven attractive for a summer's visit with its view of the countryside and the neighboring village of Pedlar Mills.

(See continuation sheet #1)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Amherst County Land Tax Books, 1782-1833.
 Amherst County Personal Property Tax Books, 1806-1842.
 Amherst County Will Books 5 (1811) and 12 (1847-50).
 Biddle, Owen. The Young Carpenter's Assistant. 1810.
 Ellis, Thomas H. A Memorandum of the Ellis Family. Richmond, Va., 1849.
 Richmond, Va., Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Archives, Amherst County File Red Hill
 farm (05-14), (including information supplied by the present owner, Mr. Edward Lewis).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 138 acres
 QUADRANGLE NAME Big Island, Va. QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000
 UTM REFERENCES

A	1,7	6,5,3	1,8,0	4,1,5,8	5,1,0	B	1,7	6,5,3	5,8,0	4,1,5,7	9,3,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING				ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		
C	1,7	6,5,3	6,18,0	4,1,5,7	7,2,0	D	1,7	6,5,3	0,7,0	4,1,5,7	4,6,0
E	1,7	6,5,2	6,6,0	4,1,5,8	1,2,0	F	1,7	6,5,2	7,6,0	4,1,5,8	5,6,0
G						H					

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION Beginning at a point on N side of State Route 647, about 500' W of intersection with Route 635; thence extending about 2300' SW along said side to NE corner of intersection of 647 and farm road; thence extending about 3600' NW along E side of said road; thence extending about 800' N, into wooded area to SW side of Feeder Creek to Pedlar (See

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES Continuation Sheet #2)

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff
 ORGANIZATION: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission DATE: March 1980
 STREET & NUMBER: 221 Governor Street TELEPHONE: (804) 786-3144
 CITY OR TOWN: Richmond STATE: Virginia 23219

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE X LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE: [Signature]
 TITLE: Tucker Hill, Executive Director DATE: MAR 18 1980
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

FOR NPS USE ONLY
 I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER
 DATE: _____
 ATTEST: _____
 DATE: _____
 CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Red Hill Farm, Amherst County, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

1

ITEM NUMBER 7,8

PAGE 1, 1

Adamesque character. It consists of fluted pilasters supporting a classical entablature with applied dentils and elliptical sunbursts. Second-floor mantels are simpler in execution. The southeast parlor retains its original chair rail distinguished by carved chevron decoration. Remaining chair rails are less elaborate in execution. The southwest parlor is presently being converted into a kitchen. Most of the original hardware has been removed.

Red Hill preserves a number of its original outbuildings. Located to the rear (west) of the house is the kitchen, a two-story building executed in three-course-American-bond brick and covered by a hip roof. Acquired by the present owners in a state of extensive deterioration, the structure underwent a major restoration that involved the total rebuilding of the east wall and south exterior end chimney. Openings are distinguished by lintel heads with turned corner blocks, like those found on the main house.

Round Top, the traditional late 18th-century overseer's residence, is located approximately a half mile to the north of the main house. It is a 1½-story, wood-frame structure covered by a gable roof. The building is flanked by two exterior end chimneys executed in stone and Flemish-bond brick. Fenestration consists of 6/6 hung-sash windows within a simple three-part architrave. The building sits on a stone foundation. Several barns and tenants' houses are found on the farm. They were constructed after 1930 and are scattered throughout the property. According to local tradition, Red Hill contained rather extensive gardens located to the south of the main house. A brick wall, presently under restoration, is all that remains of the garden plan.

RCC

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION The Red Hill Farm nomination includes 138 acres. The acreage is a fraction of the original Ellis family holdings of 638 acres including Josiah Ellis's holdings at Round Top. The nominated acreage provides a scenic setting for the farm and includes the main house, Round Top, and numerous farm buildings that date to the 20th century. The buildings contribute to the ambiance of the farm. The hill upon which the house was built is part of the nominated property and includes the drive to the house and its outbuildings.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE - The Ellis family was largely responsible for the building of the small village of Pedlar Mills. The rural area supplied the raw materials such as grain, tobacco, and lumber to the urban merchants and manufacturers. The local store in Amherst, operated by R. S. Ellis for over twenty-five years, acted as the conduit for the dispersal of local and urban goods.

Richard Shelton Ellis died in 1846, at which point most of the Ellis property had to be sold to pay off debts. A second house, Round Top, the traditional overseer's quarters, remained in the Ellis family. From 1852 to 1898 the property was under several ownerships, the longest of which was that of Robert L. Dabney. Dabney was a noted Presbyterian

(See continuation sheet #2)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Red Hill Farm, Amherst County, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET 2

ITEM NUMBER 8,6 & 10 PAGE 2, 1

theologian, author, and teacher who acquired the property in 1869 from the proceeds of his Life of Stonewall Jackson. Dabney, an architect whose most noted buildings include the College Chapel at Hampden-Sydney and Tinkling Springs Church, Augusta County, is known to have added several outbuildings and enclosures to his nearly 700-acre estate. In 1898 Dabney's heirs sold Red Hill to John E. Ellis, grandson of Joshua Ellis of Round Top. The house remained in the Ellis family until 1912 when it was sold at auction. The present owners acquired the property in 1966 and are carefully restoring the house and garden.

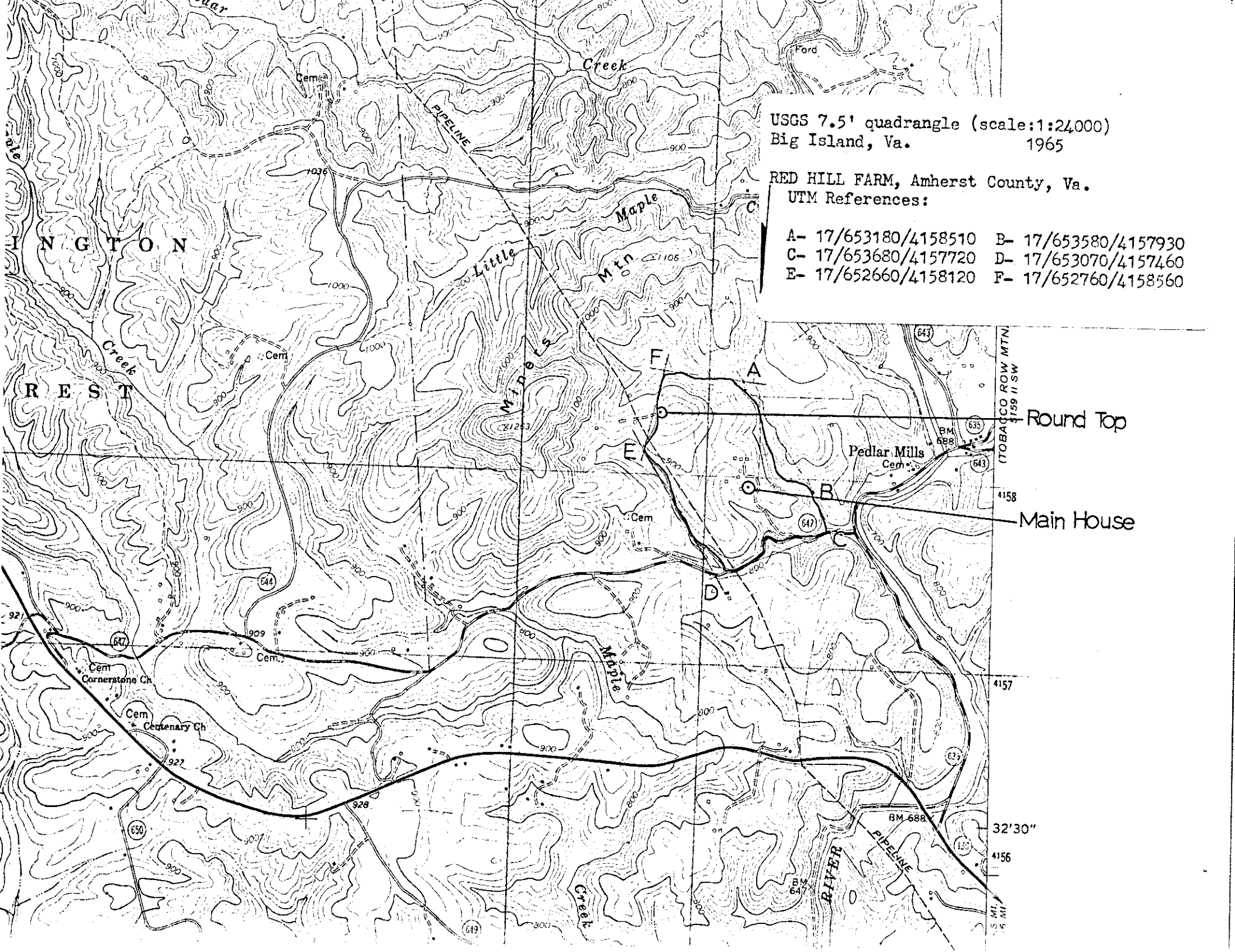
MTP/RCC

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

- (2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey
1968, 1979 State
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
221 Governor Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA - VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

River; thence extending E then SE for about 5,000', then continuing about 100' S to N side of 647, point of origin.



USGS 7.5' quadrangle (scale:1:24,000)
Big Island, Va. 1965

RED HILL FARM, Amherst County, Va.
UTM References:

- A- 17/653180/4158510
- B- 17/653580/4157930
- C- 17/653680/4157720
- D- 17/653070/4157460
- E- 17/652660/4158120
- F- 17/652760/4158560

Round Top

Main House

T O B A C C O R O W M T N
1159 ft SW
4158
4157
32'30"
4156
S M T
S M T