VLR- 12/10/98 NRHP- 1/27/99

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

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 How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Moss Neck Manor

other names/site number Virginia Department of Historic Resources File No. 16-18

2. Location

street & number State Route 766 not for publication ____
city or town Rappahannock Academy vicinity X
state Virginia code VA county Caroline code 033 Zip ____

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 ___ nationally X statewide ___ locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

12/14/98

Signature of certifying official Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property X meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

_X_ private
___ public-local
___ public-State
___ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

_X_ building(s)
___ district
___ site
___ structure
___ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	3	buildings
1	0	sites
0	1	structures
0	0	objects
2	4	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _0_

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

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: domestic Sub: single-dwelling

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: domestic Sub: single-dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

mid-19th-century Greek Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick
roof sheet metal
walls brick
other

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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.

_X_ 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.

removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or a grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)
architecture

Period of Significance 1850—1940

Significant Dates 1856

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Confederate Veteran, vol. XX, pp. 24-26.
Dora Chinn Jett, In Tidewater Virginia (Richmond, 1924), pp. 80-82.
Return Jonathan Meigs, The Corbins of Virginia, (1940), typescript in Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.
Ralph E. Fall, ms survey forms, 1972. In archives of Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond.
Thomas T. Waterman, The Mansions of Virginia, (Chapel Hill, 1945), p. 387.
September 14, 1998 telephone interview by Calder Loth with Mary Beth Hall, granddaughter of Theodore V. Houser; interview notes in archives of Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond.

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 #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary Location of Additional Data
- X State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 280 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1			2		
3			4		

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)
Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Calder Loth, Senior Architectural Historian
Organization: Virginia Department of Historic Resources date September, 1998
street & number: 2801 Kensington Avenue telephone (804) 367-2323
city or town Richmond state Virginia zip code 23221

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)
name Moss Neck Manor, Inc., C/O Daniel B. Zoller, Arnstein and Lehr
street & number 120 S. Riverside Plaza, Suite 1200 telephone 312-876-7190
city or town Chicago state IL zip code 60606-3913

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications 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. 470 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.0. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

7. Summary Description:

Summary

Completed ca. 1856 on the bluffs of the south side of the Rappahannock River in Caroline County, Moss Neck manor is a singular manifestation of antebellum Virginia's Greek Revival plantation architecture. With its two-story center section, long hyphens, and pedimented terminal wings, the house recalls the Palladian compositions of the colonial era. The multi-pedimented roofs, Flemish bond brickwork, and colonnaded verandas combine to provide a feeling of elegant grandeur in a rural Virginia setting, one heightened by the exceptional length (225 feet) of the main elevations. High-style elements include the Doric columns of the verandas and two-level portico, the octagonal cupola, and the rigidly symmetrical elevations. The house preserves its original park-like setting with mature oaks and hickory trees and a terraced garden. Entry to the property is via a nearly two-mile, tree-canopied gravel road.

Detailed Description

It is not difficult to understand the selection of this site for Moss Neck Manor atop the ridge overlooking the Rappahannock River valley, one that capitalizes on summer afternoon breezes and the splendor of the valley below. Though the panoramic views are now lost to mature vegetation, the grounds surrounding this near-pristine example of Southern Greek Revival plantation architecture still leave the first-time visitor with a sense of awe. Approach to the house is made via a gravel road that extends form the highway along a long, straight stretch across flat fields and then winds up the wooded bluff to the curtilage.

The 225-foot-long Flemish bond brick residence is symmetrical in form and is centered on a two-story core that is shaded by one-story, five-bay verandas on both the north and south elevations. Superimposed over the south veranda is a two-level pedimented portico. Though the house is basically in the Greek Revival style, the verandas and portico employ fluted columns in a Roman Doric order. Both verandas preserve original marble paving. The heavy cubical massing of the central block is emphasized by a wooden entablature that wraps around the second story and continues off the first story separation across the wings of the entire façade.
The low-pitched roof of the hyphens segments the center from the two terminal wings with their

pedimented gable roofs. Crowning the center section is an octagonal cupola with a pediment above each face. The roofs of the various sections are covered with standing-seam sheet metal.

Fenestration and entry incorporate stone lintels and sills. The windows preserve what appears to be original six-over-six double-hung sash with much early glass in place. Louvered wooden blinds frame window opening. The double doors on both elevations of the center section are ornamented with elaborately detailed classical-style carvings, apparently original. A noteworthy feature of the entrances is the original painted and stained glass panes of the sidelights and transoms. The Flemish bond masonry is in excellent condition with no visible signs of stress or inappropriate repointing. The carefully tooled joints preserve traces of original penciling. All of the exterior woodwork appears to be in excellent condition. On the whole, the exterior survives almost unchanged.

The most striking feature of the interior is the wide center hall, uninterrupted by a stair. The walnut floors and wood wainscoting if the hall are mid-20th century additions as is the wainscoting of the staircase. The six-panel doors and doorframes with symmetrical architrave trim and carved corner blocks are original. An arched entry is immediately to the right upon entry from the south door and leads to the stair. The arch appears to incorporate elements of original woodwork though there is evidence of alteration of its basic form. The stair railing with its turned walnut newel, turned balusters, and round hand railing, is original. The dining room entry is on the left wall of the hall and at the rear of space is the entry to a vestibule at the north end of the dining room. The entrance to the parlor is on the right.

The dining room features an original marble mantel with round-arched opening. Six-panel doors are located on either side of the fireplace with the left door leading to a china closet and the right door having access to the kitchen. The paneled wainscoting is a 20th-century addition. At the north end of the dining room is a wide opening trimmed with 20th-centuryh columns set on pedestals. The opening leads to into a vestibule with a small marble fountain installed after 1938 when the house was purchased and modernized by Theodore V. Houser. The parlor likewise is embellished with later architectural decoration installed by Houser, though the marble mantel here is original.

On the second floor are a center passage and two bedrooms with adjacent bathrooms. A stair in the passage leads to the attic and cupola. Both bathrooms have mid-20th-century fittings, but the

spaces were probably originally used as dressing rooms. Both bedrooms have 20th-century modifications as well.

The rooms in the east wing are connected by a long passage running along the north elevation. Except for what is currently the library, the rooms are relatively simple but preserve original marble mantels. They apparently were originally used as bedrooms. The library, which is adjacent to the parlor, is currently embellished with Jacobean-style oak woodwork acquired by Houser from a mansion in the Midwest. Two modern bathrooms have been installed in the east wing.

All of the rooms in the west wing were remodeled after the Houser acquisition. Their original character and function has not been determined but they likely were bedrooms and service rooms. Like the east wing, the rooms are connected by a long, narrow passage across the north elevation. The first two rooms west of the dining room now serve as the kitchen area and currently have ca. 1940s Sears Moderne metal cabinetry. The room adjacent is used as a den and the fourth or final room of the wing is a large office. Some original doors and doorframes in the wing are original.

Features and building in the grounds include a non-contributing garage immediately to the east of the house. Other non-contributing buildings are a guesthouse/studio approximately 200 yards east of the house and a modern tennis court nearby. A modern swimming pool is to the west of the house. Adjacent to the pool is a formal garden on what are likely antebellum terraces. The garden is a contributing feature. A non-contributing tenant house is near the entrance to the grounds. No early outbuildings or farm buildings remain although their archaeological sites are probably intact. No archaeological survey of the property has been undertaken.

8. Statement of Significance

Summary
The Moss Neck Manor residence house ranks with Virginia's outstanding examples of Greek Revival plantation architecture. Built ca. 1856 for James Parke Corbin, member of one of the state's oldest and most eminent landed families, the house is a handsomely articulated and finely crafted mansion with a façade 225 feet in length, one of the longest in the state. The five-part composition reflects renascent interest in 18th-century interest in Palladian forms, here believed to have been directly inspired by Lanveille, the porticoed, three-part Corbin family seat built in the colonial period in King and Queen County. The exterior is set off by its graceful proportions, columned verandas, and precise Flemish bond brickwork. A distinguishing feature is the octagonal cupola with its muli-pedimented roof. Inside is a series of spacious reception rooms and bedrooms, most of which preserve original woodwork and marble mantels. Confederate Stonewall Jackson use the plantation for encampment in the winter of 1862-63. In 1938 Moss Neck Manor was purchased by Theodore V. Houser, then a vice president of Sears, Roebuck & Co. who converted the long-neglected property into a prestigious country estate.

Background Information
The Corbin family settled in Virginia in the 17th century and became established as one of the colony's most prominent landowning clans. Although no member of the family achieved great historic renown, many were successful in marriage, and thusly became linked with some of the Virginia colony's most distinguished names including the Lees, the Tayloes, the Carters, and the Beverleys. The Corbin family seat was Laneville a three-part brick mansion,186 feet in length, erected in 1758 in King and Queen County. A visitor described the house as "two stories, square built, with four large rooms. . . and spacious hall passing through it, and flanked by two wings in which were pantries, storerooms,
servants quarters, bed rooms, etc.[1]

Laneville burned in 1843 and James Parke Corbin (1809-1868), who inherited the property from his father, Richard Corbin (1771-1819), did not rebuilt it but moved to Moss Neck, a family property in Caroline County. Nothing is known of the original house at Moss Neck. It may have been situated on the low grounds, near the Rappahannock River. In the 1850s James Parke Corbin began construction of the present dwelling, completed ca. 1856. The prodigious mansion, with his two-story, hipped-roof center section and long wings containing bedrooms and service areas, was an

evocation of Laneville. While embellished with Greek Revival detailing, the house has a more Georgian character, though its long hyphens and pedimented terminal wings show the Palladian influence characteristic of many high-style Georgian mansions.

No documents relating to the building of Moss Neck Manor have surfaced. The sophistication of its detailing and craftsmanship indicate that skilled builders were involved, builders possibly from nearby Fredericksburg where many architecturally refined works were being erected in this period. Some of the Greek Revival detailing, particularly the carved foliated corner blocks, is likely derived from illustrations in The Practice of Architecture (1833) one of Asher Benjamin's popular pattern books. An exception to the otherwise straightforward Greek Revival trim is the somewhat loosely interpreted Roman Doric order used in the columns of the verandas on each of the principal elevations. Nearly identical columns, along with nearly identical carved corner blocks are found in the later additions to Belle Grove, an 18th-century plantation house nearby in King George County, a fact suggesting common artisans. Likewise the flooring of Belle Grove's porticoes has black and white marble squares similar to Moss Neck Manor's.

Though architecturally conservative in its general layout, the house demonstrates exceptionally fine quality in its general design and execution. The long façade conveys an impression of grandeur without ostentation. The carefully balanced proportions are set off by the restrained architectural detailing. Especially noteworthy is the Flemish bond brickwork used through the exterior. The precision of the joints and bonding exhibits the highest standard of craftsmanship. The house gains additional interest by being among the state's the few large plantation dwellings dating from the antebellum period.

Moss Neck Manor was touched by history within a decade of its completion. In the winter of 1862-1863, Confederate general Stonewall Jackson used the plantation for his winter headquarters. The Corbins offered Jackson one of the wings for his personal quarters but he replied that he would prefer to use the office outbuilding in the yard, the house being "too luxurious for a soldier, who should sleep in a tent."[2] Jackson was visited by both generals Robert E. Lee and J.E.B Stuart during his encampment at Moss Neck. Roberta Cary Corbin Kinsolving described the scene that winter in a memoir:

> Imagine the transformation of our quiet country homestead! Thousands of soldiers in sight, the hills echoing with the noises of army life, fife and drum, brisk tattoo and reveille, the sound of may axes, the crashing of great trees as they fell—all became out daily fare of strange experience. The great forests surrounding Moss Neck were literally mowed down. Almost instantly there sprang into life settlements of log huts, with here and there notted whit tents among them. It was a moving scene, a panorama of busy life and activity.[3]

Tradition holds that on generals Robert E. Lee, J.E.B. Stuart, and William Pendleton joined Stonewall Jackson for Christmas dinner at Moss Neck in 1862. While this may be true, it is not likely that the dinner was held on the grounds and not in the house.

It is unclear in what year Moss Neck left the possession of the Corbin family. Notes in Department of Historic Resources survey forms state that the family sold the property in 1864. More likely it left Corbin ownership after 1868, the year James Parke Corbin died. The plantation changed hands several times in the late 19th century. In the 1920s it was the property of a Count D'Adhemer who apparently used the estate for hunting but did not establish residency there. The house had been unoccupied for many years when the property was purchased in 1938 by Theodore V. Houser, of Chicago a vice president of Sears, Roebuck & Co., later the company's chairman of the board. Houser began a long-term restoration of the house, converting it into a well-appointed country seat.

Houser made few changes to the exterior, but embellished the interior with paneled wainscoting and walnut floors in the hall and drawing room. He also introduced plumbing, central heating, and electricity. A conspicuous addition is the Jacobean-style library woodwork purchased from a house formerly belonging to the Simmons family, manufacturers of Simmons mattresses.

Endnotes

1 Quoted in Thomas Waterman, The Mansions of Virginia, p. 387
2 Quoted in Confederate Veteran, vol. XX, 1912, p.25.
3 ibid. p.25

Verbal Boundary Description:
Quoted from Caroline County Courthouse records:
"All those certain pieces or parcels of land, with all improvements thereon and appurtenances thereto belonging, lying and being within the County of Caroline, Virginia, designated as Parcel B, containing 180 acres, and Parcel C, containing 100 acres, on plat of survey entitled "Boundary Survey of Moss Neck Manor, Inc. , Deed Book: 130, Page 471; Deed Book 198, Page 588; & Deed Book: 212, Page 85 Port Royal Magisterial District, Caroline County, Virginia," dated October 25, 1988, prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Inc., recorded in Plat Cabinet A, page A-320 & A-320a, which plat reference is hereby made for a more particular description of the property hereby conveyed.

Boundary Justification: The boundaries include the 280 acres that currently make up the Moss Neck Manor estate, all that remains of the vast holdings that original comprised the plantation which formerly extended over two miles across the bottomlands to Moss Neck on the Rappahannock River. The 280 acres incorporates the uplands portion of the plantation, part of which was taken for U.S. Army Camp A.P. Hill. The remaining portion preserves the large park around the mansion and a sufficient amount of pastures and woodlands to maintain a rural setting for the house.

Photographs

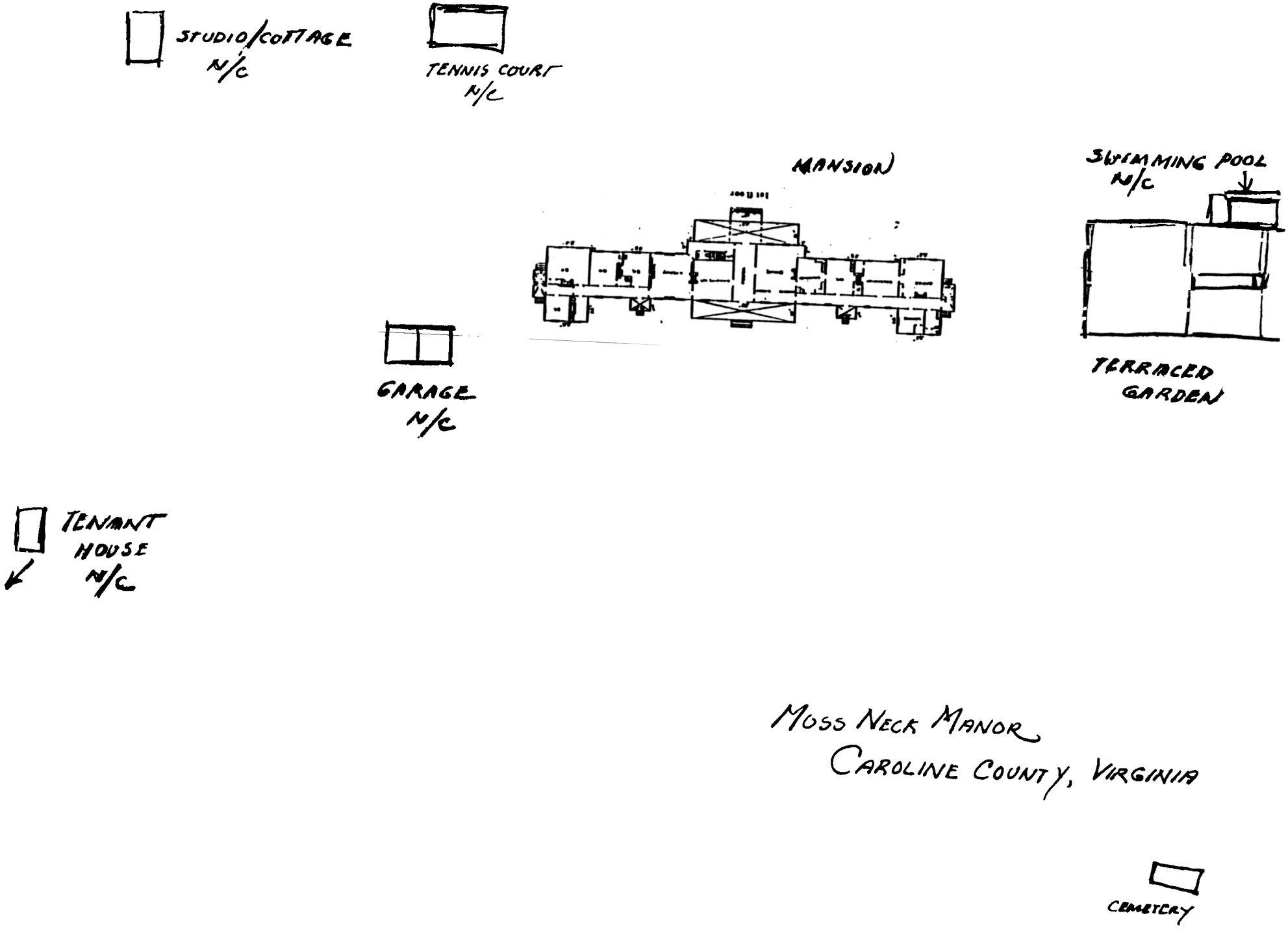
Moss Neck Manor, Caroline County, VA. (16-18)
All photographs were taken by Calder Loth, Virginia Department of Historic Resources. on Sept. 11, 1998
Negative are stored in the archives of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources

Exterior view from southeast; negative no. 17010

2. Exterior view from northeast; negative no. 17010

3. View of dining room from southwest; negative no. 17011

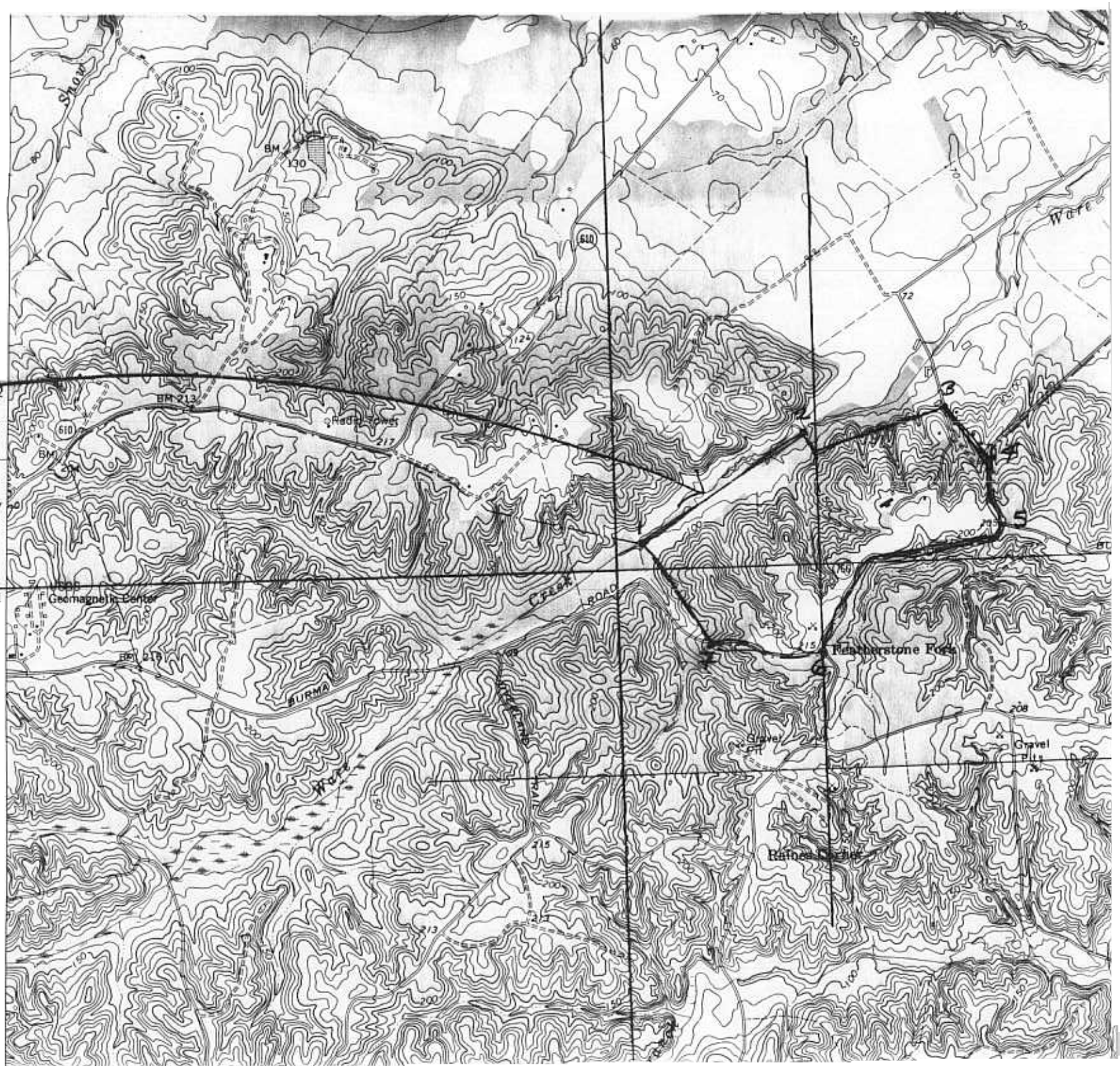
4. View of hall from east; negative no. 17011



MOSS NECK MANOR
CAROLINE COUNTY, VIRGINIA

Moss Neck Manor

Caroline Co



UTM Reference Points

	Zone
1	18
2	18
3	18
4	18
5	18
6	18
7	18