

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 _____ Gravel Hill _____ DHR # 19-06 _____
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number _____ 3990 Fearstown Road _____ not for publication
city or town _____ Charlotte Court House _____ vicinity _____
state _____ Virginia _____ code _____ 037 _____ county _____ Charlotte _____ zip code _____ 23923 _____

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally _____ statewide locally. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

N. Alexander Wise, Jr. 12/29/00
Signature of certifying official Date
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ 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

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4. National Park Service Certification
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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

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5. Classification
=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u> 3 </u>	<u> 0 </u> buildings
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u> sites
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u> structures
<u> 5 </u>	<u> 0 </u> 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 _____

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6. Function or Use

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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: _____	Sub: _____
_____ DOMESTIC _____	_____ single dwelling _____
_____ DOMESTIC _____	_____ secondary structures: _____
_____	_____ guest house _____
_____	_____ smokehouse _____
_____ AGRICULTURE _____	_____ barn _____
_____ LANDSCAPE _____	_____ garden _____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: _____ Domestic _____	Sub: _____ dwellings, storage _____
_____	_____
_____ Agriculture _____	_____ stable, storage _____
_____ Landscape _____	_____ garden _____
_____	_____

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

_____ Mid-19th Century---Greek Revival _____

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation _____ brick_, stone _____

roof _____ slate, metal _____

walls _____ wood _____

other _____

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

See continuation sheets.

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8. Statement of Significance
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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.
- 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.
- b 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 1850-1950 _____

Significant Dates 1850 _____

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above) _____ N/A _____

Cultural Affiliation _____ N/A _____

Architect/Builder Dabbs & Thomas of Richmond, Virginia _____

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

See Continuation Sheets

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

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

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property 81 acres

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	700490	4101430	3	17	700820 4100810
2	17	701100	4100990	4	17	700220 4100910

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.)

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11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title _____ John G. Zehmer, Va. Dept. of Historic Resources, compiler
_____ Lucretia P. Whitehouse, owner _____
organization _____ date _____ June, 2000 _____
street & number _____ 3990 Fearstown Road _____ telephone _____ (804)-542-5023 _____
city or town _____ Charlotte Court House _____ state _____ VA _____ zip code _____ 23923 _____

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Additional Documentation
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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)

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Property Owner
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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name _____ Lucretia P. Whitehouse _____
street & number _____ 3990 Fearstown Road _____ telephone _____ (804)-542-5023 _____
city or town _____ Charlotte Court House _____ state _____ VA _____ zip code _____ 23923 _____

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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.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 1

Gravel Hill
Charlotte County, Va.

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NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Summary Description:

Gravel Hill is a two-story frame plantation house featuring a handsome two-level portico on the front elevation. The portico is flanked by single windows on each level, which are joined with panels--- creating long vertical elements which are framed by louvered wooden blinds. The connecting of upper and lower windows with panels is found in a few other buildings (mostly churches), but the addition of pairs of full height shutters running from the sill of the lower window to the top of the upper window may be unique. Evolving from a small cottage, the main block was built in 1847. Additions made in 1912 and in the 1950s are sympathetic and interesting in their own rights. On the interior robust Greek Revival detailing characterizes the main rooms and two dissimilar stairs. The 20th-century additions are somewhat fanciful essays in the Colonial Revival. Other contributing features include an early 19th-century smoke house and barn as well as an early 20th-century log guest house and portions of a formal garden.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 2

Gravel Hill
Charlotte County, Va.

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Description:

Gravel Hill is a two-story, three-bay frame dwelling, constructed in 1847 to the designs of the master builders Dabbs and Thomas of Richmond, Virginia. Its main block is an excellent example of the Greek Revival Style with its two-story pedimented Doric portico. Originally T-shaped in plan, the building is of frame construction with weatherboard siding. It sits on a brick foundation that has been stuccoed. Paneled cornerboards with molded caps frame the façade. The hip roof has a molded cornice and plain entablature. Both levels of the portico have fluted Doric columns. The lower level has a full Doric entablature with triglyphs and metopes. The upper level entablature is unadorned, except for the soffit of the cornice that has mutules with guttae. This entablature carries around the base of the high hip roof. The porches have railings with simple wooden balusters square in section below a molded handrail.

The double-leafed front door is set below a wide transom and tall sidelights. The openings are fitted with diamond paned glass. The whole is incorporated in a crosssetted surround with raised center tablet and end blocks containing elongated Greek keys. The design of the doorway and the main corner posts with similar Greek detailing strongly indicates knowledge of the published works of Asher Benjamin and Minard Lafever on the part of the builders Dabbs and Thomas of Richmond. Greek key detailing is also found in the wooden panels that connect the 6-over-6 windows that occur in each level on either side of the portico. Wooden louvered shutters extend from the first to the second floor windows framing the connecting panels as well. This creates a very vertical element unusual, if not unique, in the mid-century architectural vocabulary of Virginia. The exterior end chimneys rise with straight sides to the cornice line where stepped shoulders support the simple rectangular stack.

At the rear of the main block is the earliest part of the house, a one-room section of the late-18th-century house built by Captain George Hannah. It is a one-and-a-half story structure with a steeply pitched gable roof featuring a single small dormer on each side. The original beaded weatherboards survive on some walls, as does the stone chimney with its brick stack.

On the northeast side of the house is a two-story frame addition made in 1912. Built at a lower level, no doubt to relate to the gardens laid out about the same time on that side of the house, the room functions as a sunken living room. On the first floor the elevation of the addition is an unusual entrance feature--a three-bay design consisting

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Gravel Hill
Charlotte County, Va.

of a one-bay central projecting porch featuring a pair of attenuated fluted Doric columns supporting an unadorned entablature which in turn supports an iron railing. The porch is flanked by an engaged continuation of the entablature on the wall surface ending with single pilasters. The whole is a fanciful and original composition in the tradition of Colonial Revival invention. The porch shelters a door with transom and tall narrow windows occur in the flanking bays. On either end of the first floor is a double-glazed door surmounted by a semi-circular louvered panel. The windows on the second floor are full-length pairs of casements with twelve lights in each leaf. A large brick terrace raised on a stone foundation extends out from the wing. It was built, no doubt, to take advantage of the view of the formal garden laid out just down the hill at the same time.

On the opposite side of the house is a one-story porte-cochere. Four robust fluted Doric columns create the sheltered space. The flat roof rests on a full Doric entablature. Where the porte-cochere is attached to the main house there is an engaged half column at the front end and a free standing column at the back. This occurs because of the irregular wall plane of the older sections of the house to which the porte-cochere is attached. Built to accommodate the large automobiles of the 1950s, the structure can easily shelter several of today's smaller vehicles.

The interior of Gravel Hill is as just as varied and exuberant as the exterior. The basic T-shaped house consists of a central hall flanked by large rectangular rooms (presently used as library and parlor). A back hall with service stair runs perpendicular to the front hall and gives access to the dining room that forms the base of the T. Beyond the dining room is the ca. 1780 portion now converted into a kitchen. To the northeast of this core the sunken living room was added and to the southwest the porte-cochere. In the basement of the core section are a storage room, a weaving room and a schoolroom.

In the main 1840s section the doors and windows have crosssetted surrounds. The front stair rises in a continuous spiral and has a simple railing consisting of a molded rail and balusters square in section set parallel to the ends of the treads. A round-headed niche occurs on the wall about halfway up the stair. Facing the stair, the room to the right was the master bedroom, but is now the library. It has a mantel with pilasters each supporting a triglyph under the shelf. A Doric cornice and frieze complete the decoration. Across the hall is the parlor that has an elaborate mid-19th-century foliated plaster cornice. The mantel is a delicate simplified Adam one with small sunbursts and a thin molded shelf. It may be older than the room.

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Gravel Hill
Charlotte County, Va.

The next section of the house contains the secondary cross hall and the dining room. The hall serves the dining room, the front hall and library. The stair rises in the west end of the hall to a landing where it divides and continues in two flights— the original (a reverse) to the old part of the house and a new flight which continues forward to serve the rooms over the new sunken living room wing added in 1912. The stair has a typical railing consisting of a simple round handrail over rectangular balusters. A curious addition to this familiar design is the insertion under the handrail of thin wooden panels about 6 inches high with a triangular bottom edge. This creates a sort of chevron border under the handrail which, while unexpected, gives a jaunty air to an otherwise predictable piece of carpentry.

The dining room, located behind the cross hall, features walnut paneling with fielded panels, dentil moldings and a decorative plaster ceiling with a border and central medallion. The mantel, said to have been moved from the oldest section of the house, has a deep cornice shelf with dentils and a crossetted architrave around the fireplace opening. Fluted pilasters with unusual capitals frame the mantel. Similar pilasters without capitals frame the windows.

A butler's pantry and enclosed porch with beaded siding connect the dining room to the original section of the house. This served as the bedroom of Captain Hannah and is now used as a kitchen and has been remodeled.

Doors from the dining room, cross hall, and parlor all open to a balcony located in the northeast corner of the sunken living room. This high-ceilinged room has high wainscot composed of vertical panels and built-in seating and shelves on either side of the fireplace. Full-height Doric pilasters frame the fireplace that has a mantel similar to the one in the dining room. A Doric frieze and cornice crown the walls. Double-leaf, twelve-light doors and a single-leaf central entrance with transom flanked by narrow windows topped by carved fans lead out to the brick terrace. The room is a delightful pastiche of Colonial Revival exuberance.

The doors from the sunken living open to a commodious stone terrace that overlooks broad lawns and the remains of the garden which was planted about the time the wing and terrace were built. The plan was elaborate with boxwood hedges defining spaces, paths between beds, arches covered by vines and rows of crepe myrtles. The terraces of the vegetable garden still exist and there was an orchard that served as a visual transition from the garden to the surrounding farmland. Enough is left to establish that this was a major example of Colonial Revival landscape design.

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Gravel Hill
Charlotte County, Va.

North of the garden is a somewhat whimsical log guest house typical of the picturesque "rustic lodge" structures of the 1920s. It has a 2½-story center section with a very steeply pitched gable roof. The end of the gable is not of log, but rather frame construction covered by horizontal siding. One-story wings of unequal lengths flank the main block. The prominence of the gable and the irregular sizes of the windows give the building a slight fairy-tale air.

Behind the house is a very large wooden barn on a stone foundation. It is thought to be the oldest structure on the property. It is a frame building covered with vertical sheathing on the gable end. The roof is high and wide and sweeps down in continuous slopes to cover lower sections on either side of the high center. One of the sides is an open shed, the other is enclosed.

Northeast of the rear of the main house is an unusual smokehouse. Its core is a tall frame building, square in plan, with a gable room with its ridge parallel to the front wall—one of the most common forms for smokehouses in Virginia. On both sides of the building and on the rear are shed roofed additions. This results in a curious geometric volume that is probably unique. It is likely that the additions were made at various times. Some may have housed the salt boxes for the first phase of curing meat. No doubt they have served different purposes over the years.

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Gravel Hill
Charlotte County, Va.

Summary of Significance:

Gravel Hill was one of several houses built in the area by Dabbs and Thomas of Richmond. Among these are Virginia's preeminent Classical and Gothic Revival mansions, Berry Hill and Staunton Hill respectively. In hiring that firm, George C. Hannah could have done no better. Gravel Hill features some unusual features of the builders Greek Revival oeuvre: the fully articulated (but idiosyncratic) Doric portico; vertically connected paired windows, diamond-paned door cases, two dissimilar stairs, and a plan of unlikely originality. The 1914 Georgian Revival addition was crafted with equally self-assured bravura. A section of the original 18th-century house is incorporated in a rear wing, a rare survival in Charlotte County. In addition to the main house the property includes imposing old trees, the remnants of an elaborate early 20th-century garden and rustic log guest house, a well-preserved frame smokehouse, and an important barn which is said to be older than the house. Both the main house and the other contributing resources retain a high degree of integrity. The property is significant at the local level and eligible for listing on the National Register under Criterion C for its varied and unusual architectural features.

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Gravel Hill
Charlotte County, Va.

Statement of Significance:

Gravel Hill was originally part of a crown grant of 32,000 acres given in 1743 to Richard Kennon. A speculator, Kennon immediately sold 12,000 acres of this land to members of the Caldwell family of the Cub Creek community. The remainder was purchased by various speculators. In 1768, Major John Brent of Lancaster County, Virginia, who married Margaret Caldwell in 1761, purchased 2,000 acres of the original Kennon lands from William Nichols and David George. The Brents established a home named "Grove Hill" that subsequently became known as "Gravel Hill." Major Brent died shortly after the American Revolution and his widow and son moved to North Carolina. They traded the house at Grove Hill and 800 acres to Robert Gaines. The property remained in absentee ownership until 1806 when it was purchased by Captain George Hannah (1780-1870) and Patsy Brent Hannah, the granddaughter of Major John Brent. The Hannahs lived in the house. After Patsy's death, George Hannah married Lucy Morton, daughter of Colonel William Morton. Their son, George Cunningham Hannah married Eliza Sparggins in 1842. They built the present Gravel Hill. In 1847, George Hannah contracted the Richmond firm of Dabbs and Thomas to construct the main section of Gravel Hill. It was built in front of and joined to a part of the previous house. Tradition holds that this was necessary since old Captain Hannah (George Hannah's father) refused to leave his house to live in a new one.

Gravel Hill became a typical large plantation with an extended family (eleven children and various adopted cousins) living there as well as a governess and 30 to 50 slaves. As a self-sufficient plantation, the house was surrounded by a number of dependencies including an office, ice house, cook house, smokehouse and twelve slave cabins. The 1860 Agricultural Census reported that it included 1,000 acres of improved land and another 990 acres of unimproved land with a total value of \$40,000. As was typical of most plantations in the area during this period the main cash crop was tobacco, with other crops raised primarily for subsistence use. George Hannah, who was listed in 1860 as owning 19 horses, was a well-known horse breeder and horse racing enthusiast.

After the Civil War, Gravel Hill declined. George Hannah died in 1870, but the property remained in the family under absentee ownership. In 1913, Gravel Hill was purchased from various heirs by Ann Atkinson Chamberlayne, granddaughter of George C. Hannah. Mrs. Chamberlayne was responsible for restoring the house as well as the 1914 addition, planting of the formal gardens, and building the rustic log guest house. Her daughter and husband, Rufus Colfax Phillips, added the porte-cochere in the 1950s. With the exception of a few years after the Rufus Colfax Phillips ownership, the house has remained in the Hannah family. It is now owned by a 5th-generation descendant of Captain George Hannah, Lucretia Phillips Whitehouse.

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Section 9, 10 Page 8

Gravel Hill
Charlotte County, Va.

Major Bibliographical References

Land and Tax Records, Charlotte County, Virginia

Tax and Census Records, Commonwealth of Virginia, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

Ailsworth, Timothy S. et al, Charlotte County, Rich Indeed, Board of Supervisors,
Charlotte County, 1979.

Barringer, V. C., "History of Gravel Hill," speech September 29, 1967 to the Charlotte
County Branch of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities.

Whitehouse, Lucretia, compiler, "Three Family Sheets on the Hannahs" based on
records at Gravel Hill.

Section 10 Geographical Data

UTMs, continued

5 17 700240 4101270

Verbal Boundary Description: The property consists of 81.36 acres of land listed as
Charlotte County tax parcel number 048-A2 and described in Deed Book 245, page
446.

Boundary Justification: The parcel nominated contains all of the historic resources
pertaining to Gravel Hill.

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Section Photo List__ Page 9

Gravel Hill
Charlotte County, Va.

Photographs

The following items of information are common to all photographs:

NAME OF PROPERTY: Gravel Hill (DHR # 19-06)

LOCATION: Charlotte Court House vicinity, Charlotte County, VA

NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER: Lucretia Whitehouse (owner)

DATE: 1999, 2000

LOCATION OF NEGATIVES: Virginia Department of Historic Resources

1 of 14. Main façade	neg. # 18681
2 of 14. West side	"
3 of 14. East side	"
4 of 14. Front window detail	"
5 of 14. Front door	"
6 of 14. Front and rear stairs	neg. # 18581
7 of 14. Parlor cornice, ceiling ornament, and brass window valence	"
8 of 14. Mantel, sunken living room	"
9 of 14. Balcony, sunken living room	"
10 of 14. Smokehouse	neg. # 18680
11 of 14. View of garden	"
12 of 14. View of garden	"
13 of 14. Guest house	"
14 of 14. Barn	"

5258 11
1ASPE

4103

4102

4101

4100

250 000
FEET

4000

Gravel Hill
Charlotte Co., VA
Zone 17

Easting Northing

- 1. 700490 4101430 ^{2'30"}
- 2. 701100 4100990
- 3. 700820 4100910
- 4. 700220 4100910
- 5. 700240 4101270

CHARLOTTE
COURT HOUSE
USGS

