

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Elmwood (DHL 23-44)

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number U.S. Route 522 West N/A not for publication

city, town Culpeper X vicinity of

state Virginia code 51 county Culpeper code 047

3. Classification

Table with 4 columns: Category, Ownership, Status, Present Use. Includes options like district, building(s), structure, site, object, public, private, occupied, unoccupied, work in progress, accessible, agriculture, commercial, educational, entertainment, government, industrial, military, museum, park, private residence, religious, scientific, transportation, other.

4. Owner of Property

name Dr. Byrd S. Leavell, Mrs. Scott Vogel, Mrs. Herbert Reynolds, Mr. Charles J. Blake, Mrs. A. E. Goddard

street & number 1705 Rugby Ave.

city, town Charlottesville N/A vicinity of state Virginia

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Culpeper County Courthouse

street & number 135 W. Cameron Street

city, town Culpeper state Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None to date has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date N/A N/A federal state county focal

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u> N/A </u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Elmwood Farm is a cattle farm of 800 acres located ten miles northwest of the town of Culpeper on U.S. Route 522 in Culpeper County. Farm lands lie on both sides of the Hazel River and encompass several hills which border the predominantly valley property. The main residence is a three-bay brick Italianate-style building constructed between 1870-74. Still standing in the yard of the main residence are the outdoor kitchen and smokehouse. The nomination consists of the house and two outbuildings, all three of which are judged to be contributing buildings.

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

The 1870 house at Elmwood is designed in the Italianate style. It is a three-story double-pile brick building laid out in a central hall plan with a central hall stairway. The first story is an English-style basement (above ground) with the second story containing the living rooms and main hallway. Two interior chimneys pierce the low-pitched hip roof. The brick is laid in the American bond pattern with decorative corner motifs of raised and painted brick. The fenestration on all floors is double hung (6 on 6) with a classically inspired lintel over each window.

The front elevation is symmetrical with three bays on each floor. The main entrance is the center bay on the second (middle) floor. At this entrance there is a single paneled door framed by a transom and side lights of clouded glass with diamond shapes outlined in clear glass. The main door is reached by ascending a full-story exterior staircase to a second-story classically-styled porch. The porch is one bay in width and has Tuscan order rails and decorative railing. The porch roofline, very similar to the main roofline, is accentuated with brackets of the same design used in the eaves of the main roof. The third floor has three windows; each window is topped by a band of painted brick containing raised brick designs in diamond shapes and decorative wooden brackets.

The basement is distinguished from the upper floors by a band of raised brick design. It has two windows and a ground-floor entrance hidden by the porch stairway.

The side elevations of the house are two bays wide with the same fenestration and decorative brick trim as the front.

The rear elevation of the building is also entered from a second-floor exterior staircase and porch. This porch, extending on each side to the rear windows, is wider than the front porch. Like the front porch, it contains brackets and a decorative railing. The rear door is also paneled and surrounded by a transom and side lights of clouded glass. Under this back porch are two ground-floor doors which open into the kitchen and a bedroom, respectively.

A central hall plan is used on the second and third floors. The wide central hallway, which contains an open stairway with curved balusters and simply ornamented

(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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1870-74 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of Elmwood lies in the fine and original brickwork of the exterior and the well-preserved interior mural paintings by the well-known local artist, Joseph Oddenino. The paintings are some of the few remaining works of the artist, who also created the interior of the Mitchells Presbyterian Church. The main residence, a fine example of Italianate-style architecture for the Culpeper area, was built by William H. Browning, an active businessman and large landowner during the Civil War period. The farm has remained in the hands of the Browning heirs and is little changed from its 19th-century appearance.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Elmwood property is part of a Crown grant made to John Nalle in 1731. The Nalle family was active in many civic affairs in Culpeper's early history. A two-story frame house, set on a natural stone foundation and basement, originally served as the main farmhouse. Because of a foundation stone bearing the initials "M.N.-1788", the house is thought to have been built by Martin Nalle in that year. Original features include panel doors, chair rails, and an enclosed staircase. The house served as a post office from 1822-34; the post office was known from 1825 as Rock Mills.

According to court records, in 1791 Martin Nalle conveyed the property to Phillip Young who held it until 1818, when it was purchased by John Thomson. In 1836 the property was purchased by William H. Browning and has remained in the possession of the Brownings and their heirs ever since.

Browning, a farmer, whose lands encompassed 1100 acres in the 1870's, was one of the largest landowners in Culpeper at that time. Active in local affairs, he served as president of the Hazel River Canal Company in 1853, officer of the Sperryville Turnpike Company, and a chief fund raiser for a Culpeper company (Colonel Porter's) during the Civil War. The land for the nearby Mount Olivet Methodist Church was donated by Mr. Browning.

About 1870, William H. Browning began construction of the second house, now the main residence at Elmwood. Most of the materials used in its construction were made on the farm. These materials include the brick, the hardware made in the blacksmith shop, and the wooden fixtures made by the farm carpenter, Mr. Carter.

William Browning died in 1874. His will described the "house I am now building" and provided for its completion. As part of its completion, the local artist, Oddenino, was hired to paint murals on the walls of the living room, hall and stairway.

(see Continuation Sheet #2)

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet #3

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 2

Quadrangle name Castleton, VA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	7	7	5	1	2	4	0	4	2	7	0	0	8	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification Beginning at a point on the S side of a dirt road approx. 3700' NE of a point on U.S. Rt. 522, said point being approx. 4000' SE of intersection with VA Rt. 650; thence extending approx. 300' E along S side of dirt road; thence approx. 100' SE; thence approx. 150' S; thence approx. 400' W; thence approx. 300' N to point of origin.

(See Continuation Sheet #3)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lucie Leavell Vogel

organization N/A

date 1985

street & number 1705 Rugby Ave.

telephone (804) 293-6611

city or town Charlottesville

state Virginia

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state 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

H. Bryan Mitchell, Director
title Historic Landmarks Division

date June 18, 1985

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Elmwood, Culpeper County, VA

Continuation sheet #1

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7. DESCRIPTION--Architectural Analysis

brackets, is flanked by two rooms. Each of the rooms has a fireplace. The wooden mantels in the rooms of the second and third floors are painted to simulate marble of different shades of brown, buff, and black.

The Oddenino murals are found in the central hall and front living room of the main (second) floor. The stairway patterns are of classical columns capped by a Greek Doric frieze. The classical motif is carried out in a series of panels which line the high hallway and appear to be recessed from the trompe l'oeil effect. The hall ceiling contains three large medallions embellished with floral motifs. The drawing room murals combine floral patterns with more paneling and frieze work. The coloration of the floral patterns in the drawing room ceiling is very vivid and striking.

On the first floor the hallway area is closed off to provide food storage area and a pantry. The dining room on this floor contains some very simple frieze work.

Modernization of the interior of the house includes three bathrooms and electricity.

About ten yards behind the 1870 house is a two-story frame kitchen with a steep gabled roof containing decorative bargeboard. Inside the kitchen is a large brick fireplace flanked by modern fresco paintings done by Rose McNeal, a local artist of the 1950's. Also in the yard is a single-story frame smokehouse with hip roof.

The entire yard is surrounded by a circumferential road and a white board fence. The front entrance has a walkway flanked by mature English boxwood. The yard also contains a variety of fruit and shade trees and a small kitchen garden with a grape arbor next to the old kitchen. A large vegetable garden lies back of the house and outside of the yard and road area.

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Elmwood, Culpeper County, VA
Continuation sheet #2

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8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

Joseph Dominick Phillip Oddenino was born August 23, 1831 in Chieri, Turin, Italy. He was educated in an Italian seminary and later became head of a family linen manufacturing company, where he designed patterns in linen. He emigrated to America. After arriving in New York in 1862, he was inducted into the United States Army as a musician. Discharged at Harpers Ferry in 1865, he settled in the Piedmont region of Virginia which reminded him of his Italian home, according to his great granddaughter, Nancy Oddenino. His name appears in the Culpeper census as a painter.

Among his commissions, which spanned a period of 25 years, were the Hebron Lutheran Church in Madison County; the Mitchells Presbyterian Church, the Culpeper Courthouse, and St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Culpeper County; Hawthorne, the Miller home in Rappahannock County; the Roy Strickler home in Banco; and Minnie Jones' home in Orange. He painted in the fresco manner, applying pigment directly to the plaster surface. At Elmwood he used a variety of architectural motifs, mostly classical.

After William Browning's death, his wife Lucie and daughter Lucie continued to live at Elmwood and supervised the completion of the house. Mrs. Browning died in 1891 and daughter Lucie inherited the farm. She married Jackson Edmund Byrd Stuart Leavell in 1896. Mr. Leavell, employed by the Southern Railway, ran the freight office in Culpeper. Later he was appointed Assistant Registrar of the Treasury by President Franklin Roosevelt. The family maintained houses in Culpeper and Washington, D. C.; they returned to Culpeper for summer vacations. Active in Culpeper community affairs, Mr. Leavell served on the Town Council for twelve years, was Town Recorder and Treasurer, and was on the vestry of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church.

Upon the death of Mr. and Mrs. Leavell, the farm passed to their three children: Dr. Byrd Leavell, professor of medicine at the University of Virginia School of Medicine; Blanche Leavell Blake; and Louise Leavell Blake. They continued the farm operations and vacationed in the main house. Today the farm is jointly owned by the children of the three aforementioned siblings of Mr. and Mrs. Leavell.

Because of the use of the main house for vacations, little of the interior plan and decoration has been changed. Interior changes which have been made include indoor plumbing and electrification. The Oddenino murals, however, have never been retouched, and original detailing remains throughout the house.

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Elmwood, Culpeper County, VA
Continuation sheet #5

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"Major Bibliographical References"

Historic Culpeper. Culpeper, Va.: Culpeper Historical Society, Inc., 1972.

Culpeper County Map. Surveyed and drawn by Eugene M. Scheel for the Second Bank of Culpeper, 1975.

Milton Grigg, A Program of Preservation. Joseph Dominick Phillip Oddenino's Mural Paintings at Mitchell's Presbyterian Church. Culpeper County. June 1, 1981.

Eugene Scheel, Culpeper A Virginia County's History through 1920. Culpeper, Va.: The Culpeper Historical Society, 1982.

Richard Guy Wilson, "Milton Grigg and Joseph Oddenino" The Daily Progress Charlottesville, Va. September 21, 1982.

10. VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION:

Justification: The bounds have been drawn to include the main house and two contributing outbuildings on approx. two acres. These two acres are a fraction of the original 1100-acre Nalle tract.

USGS 7.5' quadrangle
Castleton, VA

(scale:1:24000)
1971

ELMWOOD, Culpeper County, Virginia

UTM References:

17/751240/4270080

