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United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

For HCRS 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 Oak Hill  
and/or common Oak Hill

## 2. Location

street & number Route 663 not for publication  
city, town Oak Ridge  vicinity of Fifth (W. C. Daniel)  
congressional district  
state Virginia code 51 county Pittsylvania code 143

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<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 type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

Triple Ownership (See Continuation Sheet #1)

name (1) Waller S. Hairston, (2) Samuel Hairston c/o Waller S. Hairston  
street & number Henry, Hairston, & Price - Post Office Box 838  
city, town Easton vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state Maryland 21601

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Pittsylvania County Courthouse  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_  
city, town Chatham state Virginia

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

(?) (See Continuation Sheet #1)

(1) Historic American Buildings Survey  
title Inventory has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1958  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Library of Congress

city, town Washington state D.C.

## 7. Description

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

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Oak Hill, a Federal-style residence, is located on route 863, eleven miles west of the city of Danville in Pittsylvania County. Erected in 1823-25 and added to in 1899, the brick dwelling is a 2½-story, double-pile, central-hall plan house, covered by a gable roof. The roof has been altered; originally it probably had a cornice on the front and rear and raking boards flush with the gable end. The house has been unoccupied for about fifteen years but is in surprisingly good condition under the circumstances.

Set on a high basement, the front (north) elevation is laid in Flemish bond. The five-bay facade is dominated by a one-story, dwarf tetrastyle Roman Doric portico featuring an applied acorn within a pedimented gable. A wooden sheaf-of-wheat rail is original to the porch. The fenestration consists of original 9/9 hung sash framed by simply executed architraves and surmounted on the first story by brick jack arches. The Flemish-bond brickwork incorporates a number of glazed headers on the facade and secondary walls.

The garden (south) elevation, like the other secondary walls, is laid in Flemish bond. The elevation is dominated by a three-bay wooden porch supported by Tuscan columns and covered by a shed roof. The podium and steps have been rebuilt in the 20th century. The treatment of the door and windows is similar to that found on the north elevation.

The west end contains two semi-exterior end chimneys. The chimneys flank paired 6/6 original hung-sash windows at the attic story. The windows are surmounted by brick jack arches and retain their original louvred shutters. Originally similar to the end opposite, the east end has been altered by the addition of a 1½-story service wing built in 1899. The wing is executed in five-course American bond and is covered by a gable roof.

The interior of Oak Hill remains in a fine state of preservation. Recent acts of vandalism, inflicted when the house was vacant, constitute the only major alterations. The central entrance hall contains an open-well stair that ascends to the attic. The stair has paneled spandrels and sawn-scroll brackets. The newels, handrail and balusters were vandalized. Paralleling the stair is a paneled wainscot with a finely molded chair rail. The west parlors are the most elaborate rooms in the house. The front (northwest) parlor features its original Federal-style mantelpiece with a quilloche-carved architrave flanked by two original recessed bookcases with glass pane doors. The room contains a wainscot with original graining and an original marbleized baseboard. The mantelpiece also retains its original painted decoration. The rear (southwest) parlor contains an Ionic-columned mantelpiece flanked by semicircular arched niches. A wooden wainscot with a carved chair rail and baseboard runs the perimeter of the room. The woodwork has been repainted.

The east rooms are separated by a lateral stair hall, the stair ascending to the attic story. The simply executed stair has a turned newel, a rounded handrail, and square balusters and retains its original dark graining. The front (northeast) parlor contains a Federal mantelpiece, flanked by paneled cupboards. The rear (southeast) parlor has been partitioned into two rooms. The southeastern room retains its mahogany graining as well as its original Federal mantelpiece flanked by built-in paneled cupboards.

The second-floor rooms contain Federal mantelpieces flanked by paneled cupboards and wardrobes. The western chambers retain their original painted graining. The second-floor hall boasts a paneled wainscot, also grained.

While the majority of outbuildings at Oak Hill have deteriorated, the slave quarters and a shed remain relatively intact. The slave quarters is a five-bay, one-story brick building covered by a gable roof. The southern elevation contains four entries and a light. The

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400-1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500-1599	___ agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social
___ 1700-1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ theater
___ 1900-	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ transportation
		___ invention		___ other (specify)

Specific dates 1823-25; 1899

Builder/Architect James DeJarnett (1823-5)

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

An old and familiar landmark, Oak Hill is probably the largest and finest of a group of 19th-century plantation residences erected along the Dan River in Pittsylvania County. The Federal-style house was built between 1823-5 for Samuel Hairston, the wealthiest of the Dan River planters and one of the largest slave and landholders in the Commonwealth. His residence stands as the most thoroughly documented work of James DeJarnett, a master builder of Southside Virginia.

Samuel Hairston first appears in records as a landowner in Henry County in 1817. He was a son of Colonel George Hairston, who has amassed about 20,000 acres of land, most of which was divided among his heirs in 1827. In 1818 Hairston married Agnes Wilson, the only daughter of Peter Wilson of Berry Hill. Through this marriage Hairston had a life interest in eight tracts of land consisting of about 2,500 acres inherited by his wife from her father. In the summer of 1824 Samuel Hairston purchased 108 acres of Pittsylvania land owned by his uncle Peter Hairston of Stokes County, North Carolina. It was on this property that he built Oak Hill. The property purchase dates after Hairston engaged the local builder, James DeJarnett, however it does coincide with the Articles of Agreement made in 1823 between Samuel Hairston and DeJarnett. The articles state that the house is:

To be build on some convenient place neare where sd Hairston now lives (as sd Hairston shall point out the house to be fully build of brick fifty fore feet wide, to contain three seller rooms, four rooms a passage and pass way first floure, above the seller, & appropriate roomes on second flore, & Garret all of which work the sd Dejarnett doth bind himself to complete in a plain and substantial manner, on or before the 25th October 1825, as to make more fully understood the work are to be done in a stile and manner not inferior to Colp. Nathl Wilsons New building done by sd DeJarnett. 22 December 1823.<sup>1</sup>

Further contracts and bills were drawn for the house, the last dated January 13, 1826, "in part for the plastering I have done & am to do for him".<sup>2</sup>

At some point after the house was plastered, the rooms were painted, grained and marbleized. Executed in a graining style typical of the second quarter of the 19th century, the cupboard and wardrobe doors imitate oak, while the secondary stair appears as mahogany. The library retains its original maroon wainscot and mantel. The graining is similar in execution to that found in Mountain View, a Pittsylvania County house that has been attributed to DeJarnett. The original painting survives in good condition and is an important example of a decorative art form.

After the house was completed, Agnes Hairston, the wife of Samuel Hairston, laid out the formal gardens. According to tradition, Mrs. Hairston had the help of sixteen slaves and an overseer to complete the grounds in three months. Edith Tunis Sale in the Historic Gardens of Virginia writes of the landscape at Oak Hill, "This olive grove, magnolia tree, and winding walks and oval and square and rectangular flower beds are not all. The view from any of its terraces of the low ground stretching away right to the banks of the Dan... makes for

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

- Clement, Maud Carter. The History of Pittsylvania County, Va. Lynchburg, Va.: J. P. Bell Co., Inc.
- "Death of Samuel Hairston." Richmond Dispatch, 19 March 1875, p. 3
- "Oak Hill." The Danville Rec, 17 August 1954, p. 5. (Virginia State Library, Peel #156).  
(See Continuation Sheet # )

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 20 acres  
 Quadrangle name Brosville, Va.-N.C. Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A	1 7	6 2 5 5 6 0	4 0 4 6 1 8 1 0	B	1 7	6 2 5 7 2 0	4 0 4 5 8 1 1 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	1 7	6 2 5 5 7 0	4 0 4 5 3 2 1 0	D	1 7	6 2 5 4 1 0	4 0 4 6 0 9 0
E				F			
G				H			

**Verbal boundary description and justification** Beginning at a point on the SE side of State Route 863, at SE corner of intersection of said route with State Route 862; thence extending about 600' NE along said side of route 863; thence extending about 1400' SE, partially following private drive, to Southern Railway tracks; thence extending about 600' SW along said tracks; thence  
 List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries (See Continuation Sheet #3)

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 September 1979

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  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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

TUDOR HILL, Executive Director

title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

date Sept 20 1979

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

date Dec 28 1979

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Oak Hill, Pittsylvania County, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET #1 ITEM NUMBER 4,6,7 PAGE 1

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

(3) Mrs. Sallie H. Bullock  
145 Copeland Road, N.E. #88  
Atlanta, Georgia 30342

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

(2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey  
1967, 1968, 1978, 1979 State  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission  
221 Governor Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

7. DESCRIPTION

interior has been whitewashed. The shed is a one-story brick building with a simply executed entrance that retains its original hinged door.

The grounds surrounding the house are much overgrown but traces of the 19th-century landscaping remain. The WPA inventory of February 17, 1937, describes the grounds when they were still maintained and as they must have appeared decades earlier:

The handsome brick house is situated on the edge of a hill, in a body of trees in which there are many large oaks. Approaching the front walk to the house are magnificent boxwoods on either side...The most outstanding beauty to Oak Hill is the magnificent flower garden, outlined with many lovely boxwoods. To the right of the house, there are long pathways, which wind around in the garden. At the end of one walkway is a little room made of cedars. This was formed by planting several cedar trees in a circle. These cedars are now very tall, and showing signs of age...Directly at the back of the house is a beautiful incline, which leads to the walkways coming in from the side, and there is found a huge magnolia tree of unusual shape and beauty.<sup>1</sup>

The property presently boasts only the larger trees and shrubs planted on a multi-terraced lawn that leads down to railroad tracks. The first level closest to the house is planted with box, the second level with crape myrtle, and the third with magnolia. Some remnants of the flower garden survive. A large 19th-century, cast-iron garden urn also survives.

RCC

<sup>1</sup>"Oak Hill," (Pittsylvania County, Virginia) WPA Inventory, February 17, 1937.

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Oak Hill, Pittsylvania County, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET #2

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 1

### 8. SIGNIFICANCE

18th-century garden at Carter's Grove near Williamsburg. Typical of most Pittsylvania County gardens, the design follows a formal 18th-century precedent rather than the contemporary plans of the noted American landscape writer A. J. Downing. That the gardens were well-thought of may be surmised from an article appearing in the Richmond Whig & Public Advertiser for February 7, 1851. The writer, calling himself "Cosmopolite" observed:

I have traveled over fifteen states of this union, and have never seen any thing comparable to his (Samuel Hairston's) yard and garden. Except some of them in the Mississippi Delta, and none of them equal it. Mrs. Hairston has been beautifying it for years-and a good old minister, in preaching near the place, and describing paradise, said, 'It is as beautiful as Mr. Hairston's,' or as a friend who had visited Washington City for the first time, remarked that 'The public grounds were nearly as handsome as Saquel Hairston's.'<sup>4</sup>

The same writer also wrote of the wealth of Hairston. He observed:

When I was in his section a year or two ago, he was the owner of between 1600 and 1700 slaves, in his own right, having but a little while before taken a census. He also has a prospective right to about 1000 slaves more, which are now owned by his mother-in-law, Mrs. Ruth Hairston, he having married her only child. He now has the management of them, which makes the number of his slaves reach near 3000...he has to purchase a large plantation every year to settle them on. A large number of his plantations are in Henry and Patrick Co., Virginia. He has large estates in North Carolina. His landed property in Stokes alone, is assessed at \$600,000. His wealth is differently estimated at from 3-5 millions...<sup>5</sup>

Although Hairston had amassed considerable wealth after building Oak Hill, the house would appear not to have been altered to conform to fashionable trends in American architectural taste. Hairston was apparently satisfied with DeJarnett's work and embellished the grounds rather than the house. Hairston died in March 1875, his obituary in the Richmond Dispatch noting, "Previous to the late war...he was regarded, we believe, as the richest citizen of this state, owning a number of fine plantations in Pittsylvania and Henry Counties and in North Carolina, all of which were stocked with slaves, beside large amounts of banking and state stocks..."<sup>6</sup> The house was inherited by his son, Samuel Hairston, and is presently owned by his descendants.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Oak Hill, Southampton County, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET #3

ITEM NUMBER 8,9,10 PAGE 2

8. SIGNIFICANCE

<sup>1</sup>Manuscript page, "Wilson and Hairston Papers," #4134, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, June 1978.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Sale, Historic Gardens of Virginia, p. 321.

<sup>4</sup>Richmond Whig & Public Advertiser, Feb. 7, 1851, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Richmond Dispatch, March 19, 1875, p. 3.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Pittsylvania County Deed Books 25, 27, 19, 13, 17, 20, 22, 24, 48.

Land Tax Books, 1804-50.

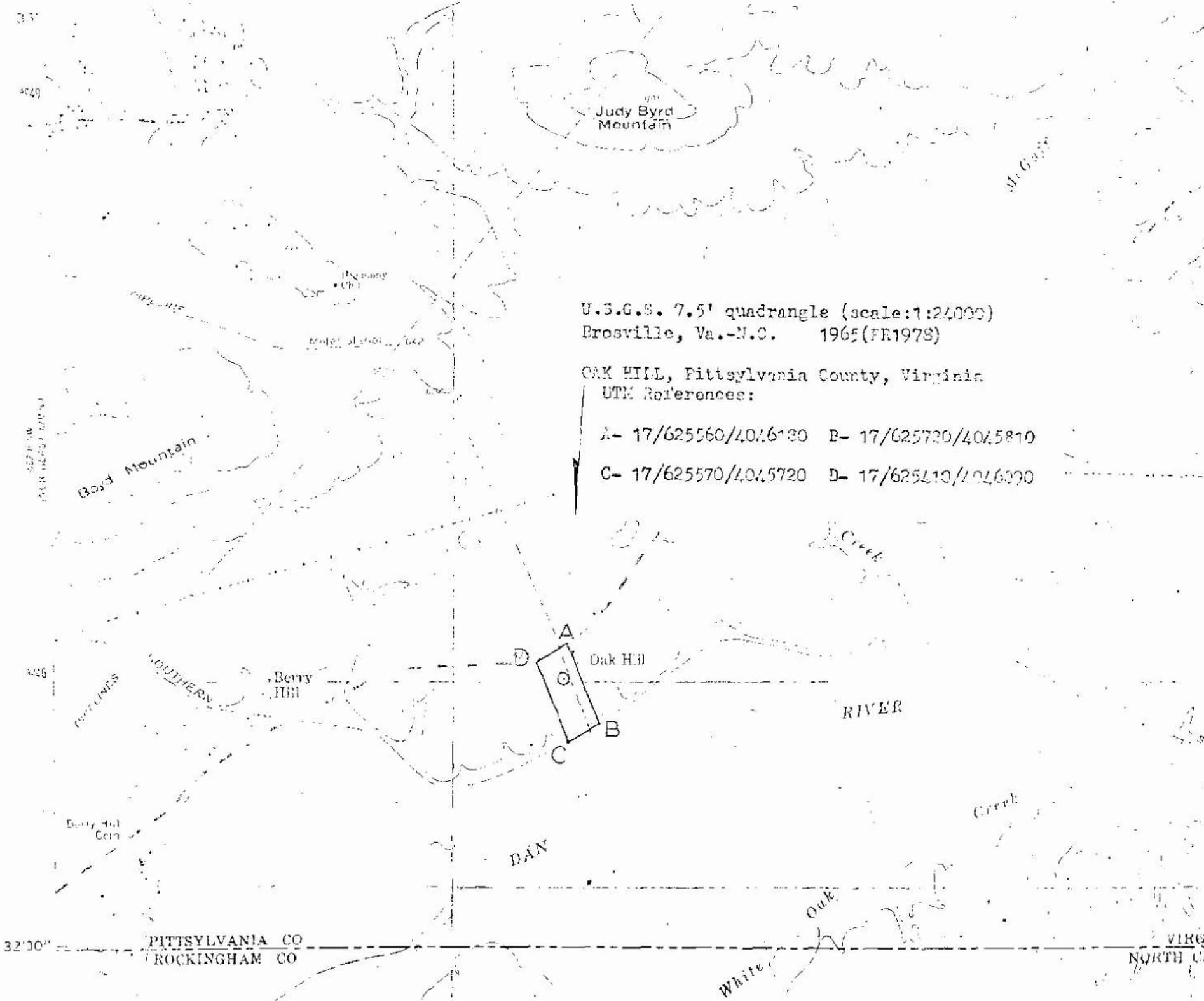
Personal Property Tax Books. 1804-50.

"The Richest Man in Virginia." Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser, 7 February 1851, p. 1.  
Sale, Edith Tunis. Historic Gardens of Virginia. Richmond: William Byrd Press, 1923.  
"Wilson and Hairston Papers," #4134, Southern Historical Collection University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, June 1978.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA - Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

extending about 1400" NW, partially following E side of private drive, to SE side of route 863, point of origin.

The twenty nominated acres include the main house and adjacent outbuildings. The property is bounded on the north by route 863, on the south by the Southern Railway tracks, on the east by a dirt road which leads to the house, and on the west by a line that parallels that on the east and follows an old drive that is adjacent to the eastern gardens. The nominated acreage is a very small fraction of the original holdings of Samuel Hairston. The boundaries are drawn to include the main house, old outbuildings and formal gardens that run to the railroad tracks. The acreage also includes the original hill garden site of the house, and the bounds are drawn to exclude recently constructed buildings on the Hairston property.



U.S.G.S. 7.5' quadrangle (scale:1:24,000)  
Brosville, Va.-N.C. 1965 (FR1978)

OAK HILL, Pittsylvania County, Virginia

UTM References:

- A- 17/625560/4046130 B- 17/625720/4045810
- C- 17/625570/4045720 D- 17/625610/4046070

32°30' 32' 30" PITTSVLVANIA CO  
ROCKINGHAM CO

VIRGINIA  
NORTH CAROLINA