

VLR-9/15/81 NRHP-2/10/83

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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received  
date entered

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

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

1. Name

historic MELROSE (PREFERRED)

and/or common MELROSE CASTLE

2. Location

street & number Virginia Route 602 n/a not for publication

city, town Casanova X vicinity of 7th congressional district (J. Kenneth Robinson)

state Virginia code 51 county Fauquier code 061

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 type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	n/a	<input checked="" 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

name United Virginia Bank, Trustee <sup>Carlton L. Good</sup> c/o W. H. Eanes, Vice-President and Trust Real Estate Officer

street & number Box 26665

city, town Richmond Casanova N/A vicinity of state Virginia 22261

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Fauquier County Courthouse

street & number N/A

city, town Warrenton state Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1969, 1978  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 221 Governor Street

city, town Richmond state Virginia 23219

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" 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

The original portion of Melrose is a strongly proportioned five-bay structure built in the Castellated mode of the mid-19th-century Gothic Revival. The 19th-century architectural critic Andrew Jackson Downing would describe the house as a "villa", which he explained is a "country house of a person of competence of wealth sufficient to build and maintain it with some sense of taste and elegance."<sup>1</sup> In its scale, setting, and appearance, the house indeed projects the romantic aestheticism of a rich and cultivated individual.

The walls of the house are executed in light brown fieldstone laid in random course, squared rubble employing a dressed stone belt course and dressed lable molds over the windows. Giving the house its castle-like air are the three-story octagonal tower in the center bay of the facade and the corbeled cornices with their battlemented parapets on both the tower and main roof. Entrance to the house on the facade (east front) is through a modest doorway in the north side of the tower. The entrance is topped by a shallow Gothic arch. Unfortunately, the tower and much of the facade are obscured by a thick growth of ivy. The vines may have been part of the 19th-century romantic landscaping, but they have been allowed to get out of hand.

The house is L shaped with what was originally the service area occupying the end of the ell. Entrance into the ell is through a vestibule on the north wall, at the junction of the ell and the front section. At the north end of the front section is a stone bay window with a stone cornice and tall narrow sashes. The house originally had a long, wooden veranda along the south side, but this has disappeared, leaving only its floor and the outline of its roof marked on the wall. Access to the veranda was through a doorway on the south end of the front section. Despite the somewhat austere character of the original section, the house has a convincingly romantic air and well illustrates the ideals of the mid-19th-century Gothic Revival.

Melrose was enlarged considerably around 1920 through a large addition to the west end for expanded service areas. The walls of this addition are laid in a rough-faced coursed ash with battlemented parapets. Although the addition attempts to harmonize with the original section, it has an institutional air and lacks the character and refinement of the original section.

Unfortunately, most of the 19th-century flavor of the interior has been lost. As with many Gothic Revival houses, most of the richness of an interior was achieved through the use of colorful decorations and textiles such as carpeting, curtains, and furniture, rather than with architectural features. Stripped of all these elements, as the house has been, the rooms of Melrose appear quite bare. The loss of the original interior character is compounded in this instance by an attempt made in recent decades to give the interior a Georgian aspect. The remodeling was a vapid one: most of the added features are thin stock moldings used to make up cornices, chair rails, and panels. The reception room's Georgian mantels and parquet floors also date from the interior remodeling. Only the generous proportions of the principal rooms give an idea of the mid-Victorian grandeur. The most noticeable original features left on the first floor are the relatively restrained stair and an undecorated Tudor arch separating the center hall from the tower entrance. The stair is an ordinary one of the period, having scrolled brackets, turned balusters, oval handrail, and turned newel.

The plan of the house is simple. The wide center hall separates the two principal reception rooms; the parlor is to the north and the library to the south. The dining room was behind the library, but its space has been used to create two smaller rooms, a corridor, and a back stair. The present dining room occupies what was the original kitchen immediately west of the former dining room. An iron crane in the fireplace serves to remind one of the

(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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" 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** 1856-60      **Builder/Architect** George Washington Holtzclaw

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This ruggedly picturesque country house is rated among Virginia's most important expressions of the Castellated mode of the mid-19th-century Gothic Revival. Built between 1856 and 1860, it was the creation of Dr. James H. Murray and his brother, Edward Murray. The architect has not been identified, but its builder is said to have been George Washington Holtzclaw, a Fauquier County resident. With its battlemented stone walls, central tower, and dramatic siting, Melrose well illustrates the impact of the 19th-century Romantic movement, more especially the Medievalism popularized by Sir Walter Scott, on Southern landed families. In addition to its architectural significance, the house is interesting from a literary standpoint, as it was visited early in this century by Mary Roberts Rinehart, who was inspired by the place to write her classic mystery The Circular Staircase. Melrose was also the site of Federal troop occupation during the Civil War.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Dr. Murray, whose forebears had come to Barbados from Scotland and thence to Baltimore, married Fanny Harrison Cheston, an heiress to a shipping fortune. With this wealth he was able to buy property in Virginia and undertake the construction of Melrose. The name Melrose is taken from Melrose Abbey in Scotland near where Dr. Murray's ancestors lived. The house's name may also have been inspired by the writings of Sir Walter Scott, who used Melrose Abbey as a setting in some of his stories. Scott was as widely read in America as he was in his native land and is credited with fostering much of this country's interest in Gothic Revival architecture.

The Murrays did not long enjoy their grand new seat, as Dr. Murray enlisted in the medical corps of the Confederate Army and his brother became a captain in the Fauquier County Guard. The family had completely vacated the house by April 1862, when the place was occupied by Federal troops. It was during that time that a lieutenant in the Indiana Volunteers inscribed on the interior of a closet the following still-intact message to the owner:

Dear Sir, I think you would have saved the destruction of your beautiful house by remaining at it. I am much pained to see so fine a place destroyed. Yet I presume you think it none of my business neither yet. My desire is that all good citizens shall enjoy their homes, of course, you do not fall under the above either.

(See Continuation Sheet #1,2).

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Bridgeman, Mr. E. W., Jr. "Cedar Park", Maryland. Telephone interview. July 1981.  
 Downing, A.J. The Architecture of Country Houses. 1850.  
 Evans, M. Louise. An Old Timer in Warrenton and Fauquier County, Va. Warrenton, Va.:  
 Virginia Publishing Co., 1955. (See Continuation Sheet #2 ).

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 24 Acres  
 Quadrangle name Catlett, Va. Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A	1 8	2 6 4 2 10 10	4 12 8 14 10 11 10	B	1 8	2 6 4 5 0 10	4 2 8 3 7 6 10
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	1 8	2 6 4 2 2 0	4 2 8 3 6 1 0	D	1 8	2 6 3 9 5 0	4 2 8 3 7 7 0
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet # 3

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

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

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff  
 organization Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission date September 1981  
 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 H. Bryan Mitchell  
 H. Bryan Mitchell, Executive Director  
 title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission date MAY 10 1982

**For HCRS use only**  
 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  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

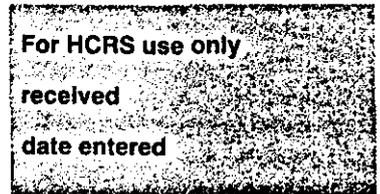
**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

MELROSE, Va. Route 602, Casanova, Virginia, Fauquier County

Continuation sheet #1

Item number#7,8

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7. DESCRIPTION

original function of the space. To the north of the present dining room is a smaller room now used as an office. A modern kitchen, pantry, and servants' rooms occupy the later wing.

The second-floor rooms are all very plain. The most noticeable original features include a somewhat simplified bracketed screen at the top of the stair and some very simple Tudor-arch wooden mantels in the bedrooms. A plain circular stair, also original, ascends in the tower from the second story to the roof.

As with most 19th-century villas, the site for Melrose was carefully selected for dramatic effect. Entrance from the county road into the grounds is through woods which open up into a tree-studded park. An oval drive leads through the park to the north side of the house. The trees are at maturity, giving the park a venerable aspect. Immediately to the south of the house is a sharp cliff at the bottom of which is Turkey Run. From the original veranda (now a terrace), one could have panoramic views across the cleared bottom lands to rolling hills in the distance.

No significant early outbuildings remain on the property. Included elsewhere on the farm are numerous modern farm buildings as well as a modern one-story, five-section dwelling. These latter structures are not included in the area nominated.

Melrose is presently unoccupied and unfurnished. The house is maintained in good condition and may be sold for institutional use.

CL

<sup>1</sup>A. J. Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses (1850), p.257.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

Historical Background

Fortunately, Melrose was not destroyed, and the grounds continued to be an encampment for Federal forces. Perhaps discouraged by the situation, the Murrays sold the house and its 1,300 acres on December 4, 1863, to Horace L. Kent of Richmond. (Kent was the original owner of the Kent-Valentine House in Richmond, listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places). The Murrays moved back to Maryland, purchasing Cedar Park, a venerable 17th-century manor house in Anne Arundel County. Still preserved at Cedar Park, in the possession of Murray descendants, is an unsigned watercolor rendering of Melrose, probably executed by the architect.

The land on which Melrose was established has an interesting early chain of title. It formerly was part of the manorial grants to Robert (King) Carter who in 1727 put 10,610 acres of it in the name of his son-in-law, Mann Page. The "Pageland" tract was later bought by Col. Armistead Churchill, and in 1765 it was acquired by Henry Fitzhugh of Stafford County,

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
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MELROSE, Va. Route 602, Casanova, Virginia (Fauquier County)  
Continuation sheet #2

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8. SIGNIFICANCE

Historical Background

who built the first house on the property in the late 18th century. It was from the Fitzhugh family that the property was purchased in 1834 by James H. Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald had a shadowy background and led the locals, including his wife, to believe that he was the lost Dauphin of France. Indeed, he eventually left his wife and returned to France where he died in 1852. The Murrays purchased the Melrose property from Mrs. Fitzgerald in 1856 and removed the old Fitzhugh house to make way for their new castle. The next owner after the Murrays, Horace L. Kent, kept the place until his death in 1881, at which time it was acquired by William Montague. Montague died in 1899, and the place was then purchase by Dr. Thomas Turnbull. Turnbull's widow sold Melrose in 1916 to William Weightman, a noted polo player. The most recent owners, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Bryant, bought Melrose in 1950. Mrs. Bryant was the daughter of Sen. James Cousins of Michigan. The Bryants were hospitable tenants and held many hunt breakfasts for the Casanova Hunt at Melrose, which they frequently opened for garden tours. They also maintained on the farm an outstanding registered Angus cattle herd and a thoroughbred horse farm. Melrose was acquired by the present owners in 1980 from Mrs. Bryant's heirs.

CCL/VDS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Fauquier County Deed Books 1, 2, 7, 34, 59.

Land Tax Books 1782, 1790, 1816-1870.

Will Books 6, 8.

Fauquier County, Virginia Historical Notes. Warrenton, Va., 1814.

Fauquier County, Virginia. Warrenton, Va.: Bicentennial Committee, 1959.

Scheel, Eugene M. The Guide to Fauquier. Warrenton, Va.: Warrenton Publishing Co., 1976.

Spotsylvania County Will Book T.

Northern Neck Grants and Surveys.

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National Park Service**

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

MELROSE, Route 602, Casanova, Virginia (Fauquier County)

Continuation sheet #3

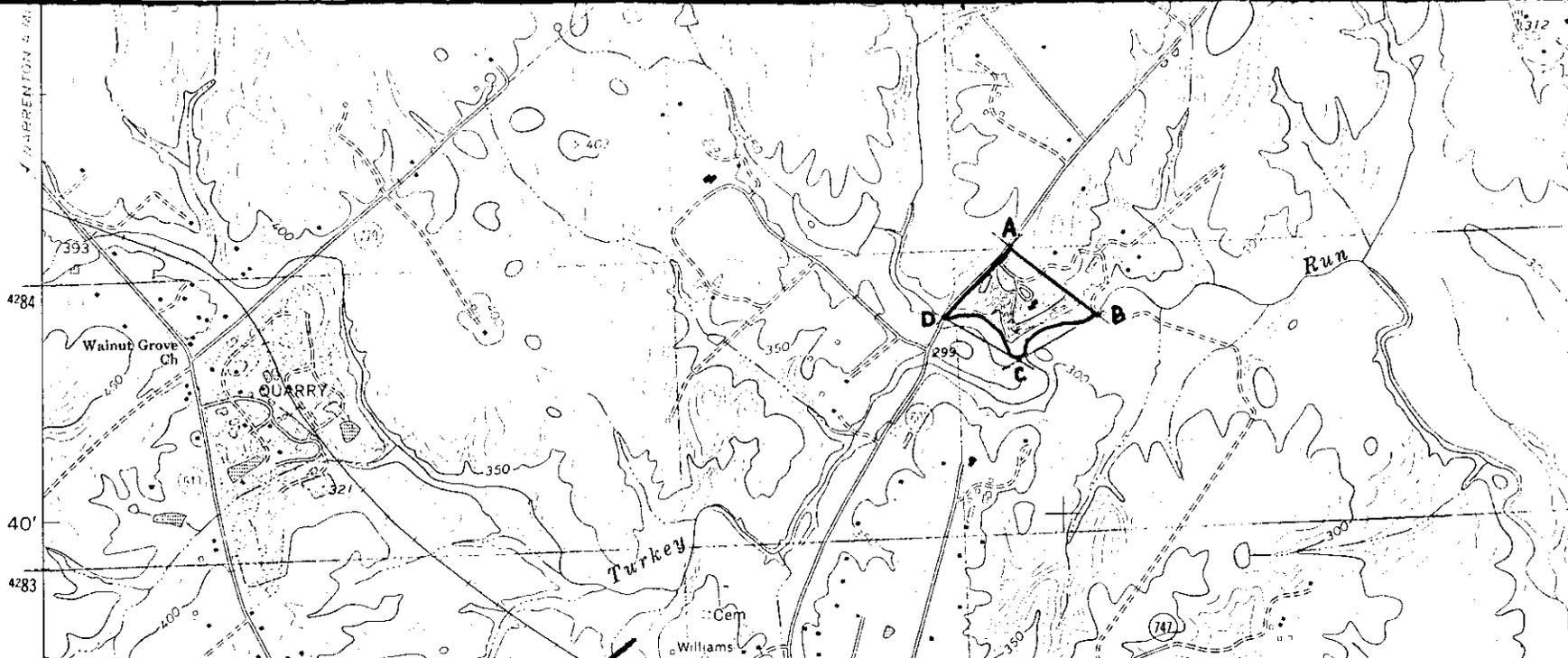
Item number 10

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10. Geographical Data

Beginning at a point on E side of VA 602, about 6500' NE of the intersection with VA 747; thence extending about 1250' SE to W side of Turkey Run; thence about 1000' SW along said side to confluence with Gupton Run; thence about 1400' NW along N side of Gupton Run to E side of VA 602; thence about 1150' NE along said side to point of origin.

Boundary Justification: The boundaries have been drawn to include the main house, its driveway and lawn, and the wooded park to the west and north of the house. It also includes the steep wooded slopes leading down to Turkey Run, all of which serve to provide an approximate 19th-century-type informal setting for the house.



USGS 7.5' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)  
 Catlett, Va. 1966(PR1978)

MELROSE, Fauquier County, Va.

UTM References

A-18/264200/4284010    B-18/264500/4283760

C-18/264220/4283610    D-18/263950/4283770

