

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Virginia	
COUNTY: Fluvanna	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Fluvanna County Court House I Historic District

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Fluvanna County Court House Preservation District

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: Extending .3 mi. N of intersection of Rt. 601 and Rt. 15, extending to intersection of Rt. 15 and Rivanna River, bounded on the east by
CITY OR TOWN: Rt. 15, and bounded on the west by Rivanna River. Palmyra.

STATE Virginia	CODE 51	COUNTY: Fluvanna	CODE 065
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Fluvanna County

STREET AND NUMBER:
Fluvanna County Court House

CITY OR TOWN:
Palmyra

STATE: Virginia	CODE 51
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Fluvanna County Court House

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Palmyra

STATE Virginia	CODE 51
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory

DATE OF SURVEY: 1958 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Washington

STATE: D.C.	CODE 11
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Virginia
COUNTY: Fluvanna
ENTRY NUMBER:
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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The complex of court buildings for Fluvanna County is located in the middle of the small village of Palmyra. The principal building, the court house, stands at the top of a steep knoll overlooking a small square containing a monument to the Confederate soldiers of Fluvanna County. The court house is in the form of a tetrastyle Roman Doric temple and is five bays deep. A variety of materials was used for the exterior fabric of the building: brick laid in Flemish bond for the walls; stucco for the columns and pilasters; stone for the column and pilaster caps, steps, water table, window sills, keystones and lintels; and wood for the pediment, entablature shutters and sash. The stone lintel over the main entrance is inscribed: "THE MAXIM HELD SACRED BY EVERY FREE PEOPLE OBEY THE LAWS." The lintel over the west entrance is inscribed with the date 1830. The two levels of windows on either side of the building are separated by pilasters, while rear elevation is composed of three semi-circular arched windows also separated by pilasters. The central window of the rear elevation is false, and is covered over by shutters. On the whole, the exterior of the court house is well preserved.

The interior of the court house is also remarkably unchanged from its original form, and, indeed, is one of the few Virginia court houses of its period to survive in such condition. The only major change is the loss of the original seating. The original heavy balustrade around the judges bench, jury box, and clerk's desk survives, as does that separating the court from the audience. The balustrades for the two staircases are of a more delicate design than the others. Although they also are original, the staircases are unusual in that both break for a landing about one-third of the way up, and are outfitted with lecterns so that they may serve as witness stands. At the top of the stairs is a gallery, leading on to which is the jury room and the judge's chamber.

On the west side of the court house is a small lawyer's office of the same period of the court house. The south gable of the office contains a Palladian arch motif similar to those in the end pavilions of Bremono and in the gable of the Fork Union Baptist Church. The small brick building on the east side of the court house is now used as the Fluvanna County library. Behind the court house are other county buildings, including a modern clerk's office. On the east side of the square before the court house is the stone jail house, now the county museum. Built by John W. Hughes, this interesting structure, with its brick parapet gable ends, central pavilion, and brick hound's tooth cornice, is very similar in style to several of the farm buildings at Bremono, also built by Hughes.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

2. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian; 16th Century 18th Century 20th Century
 15th Century 17th Century 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1829, 1831

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

From the time of its formation in 1777 until 1828, Fluvanna County did not have a satisfactory permanent county seat. In the spring of 1828, the question of a location for the court was again brought up. Sentiment was strong for and against removing the public buildings to either Wilmington or Palmyra, or repairing and enlarging the existing facilities on the south side of the Rivanna River. Two referenda were necessary before the partisans of Palmyra were victorious. The first public building put up in the new, centrally located, county seat was the stone jail, completed in 1829. The jail house was built by John G. Hughes, a stonemason, and is markedly similar in style to several of the farm buildings Hughes had built for General Cocke at Brems.

General John Hartwell Cocke served as one of the five special commissioners who drafted plans for both jail and court house. Although the precise degree to which he influenced the final appearance of the court complex is uncertain, tradition attributes to him primary responsibility for the design of the court house. Part of the construction work on the court building may have been done by Cocke's slaves who were trained artisans, and the relationship between the new jail and the Brems outbuildings is certain. Construction of the former building was supervised by the Reverend Walker Timberlake, a Methodist preacher, who supervised the construction of many building and engineering works in the county. The court house was completed in 1831, and has been in continuous use to the present day with practically no alterations in the original fabric.

According to Joseph Martin's Gazetteer of Virginia for 1835, the "thriving" village of Palmyra consisted of: "14 dwelling houses, 1 methodist house of worship, 1 mercantile store, 1 tavern, 1 merchant, grist and saw mill, 1 woolen factory, 2 saddlers, 2 tailors, 1 boot and shoe factory, 1 tanyard, 1 cabinet maker, and several carpenters and coopers," in addition to the newly built county buildings and a fine bridge across the Rivanna.

In reference to later Greek Revival structures, Fluvanna Court House appears architecturally naive, but its design conveys the sense of honesty and personal attention evident in all the buildings associated with General Cocke. The court house, stone jail, and other county buildings combine to form one of the most picturesque and unspoiled of Virginia's early county-seat complexes. The simple Doric temple, set on the edge of a steep bluff with its attendant court buildings and background of rolling hills moved Talbot Hamlin to term the scene the "'Acropolis' of Palmyra."

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Fluvanna County Order Book, 1828-1931.
 Fluvanna Civil War Commission, Fluvanna County Sketchbook: 1777-1963,
 Richmond, 1963.
 Fluvanna County Historical Society, The Bulletin, No. 9 (Oct. 1969): 16.
 Hamlin, Talbot, Greek Revival Architecture in America, New York, 1944.
 McGehee, Minnie L., "Fluvanna's Several Seats" in Virginia Cavalcade, Vol.
 16, No. 1 (Summer 1966).
 Whiffen, Marcus, "Early County Court Houses of Virginia", in Journal of
Society of Architectural Historians, Vol. xviii, No. 1 (March, 1959).

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	37° 51' 55"	78° 16' 09"				
NE	37° 51' 55"	78° 15' 49"				
SE	37° 51' 27"	78° 15' 49"				
SW	37° 51' 27"	78° 16' 09"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 60 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff, James W. Moody, Jr., Director

ORGANIZATION

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE

November 24, 1970

STREET AND NUMBER:

Room 1116, Ninth Street Office Building

CITY OR TOWN:

Richmond

STATE

Virginia

CODE

51

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Edw. P. Alexander
 Name

Dr. Edward P. Alexander, Chairman
 Title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

Date

1/5/71

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

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

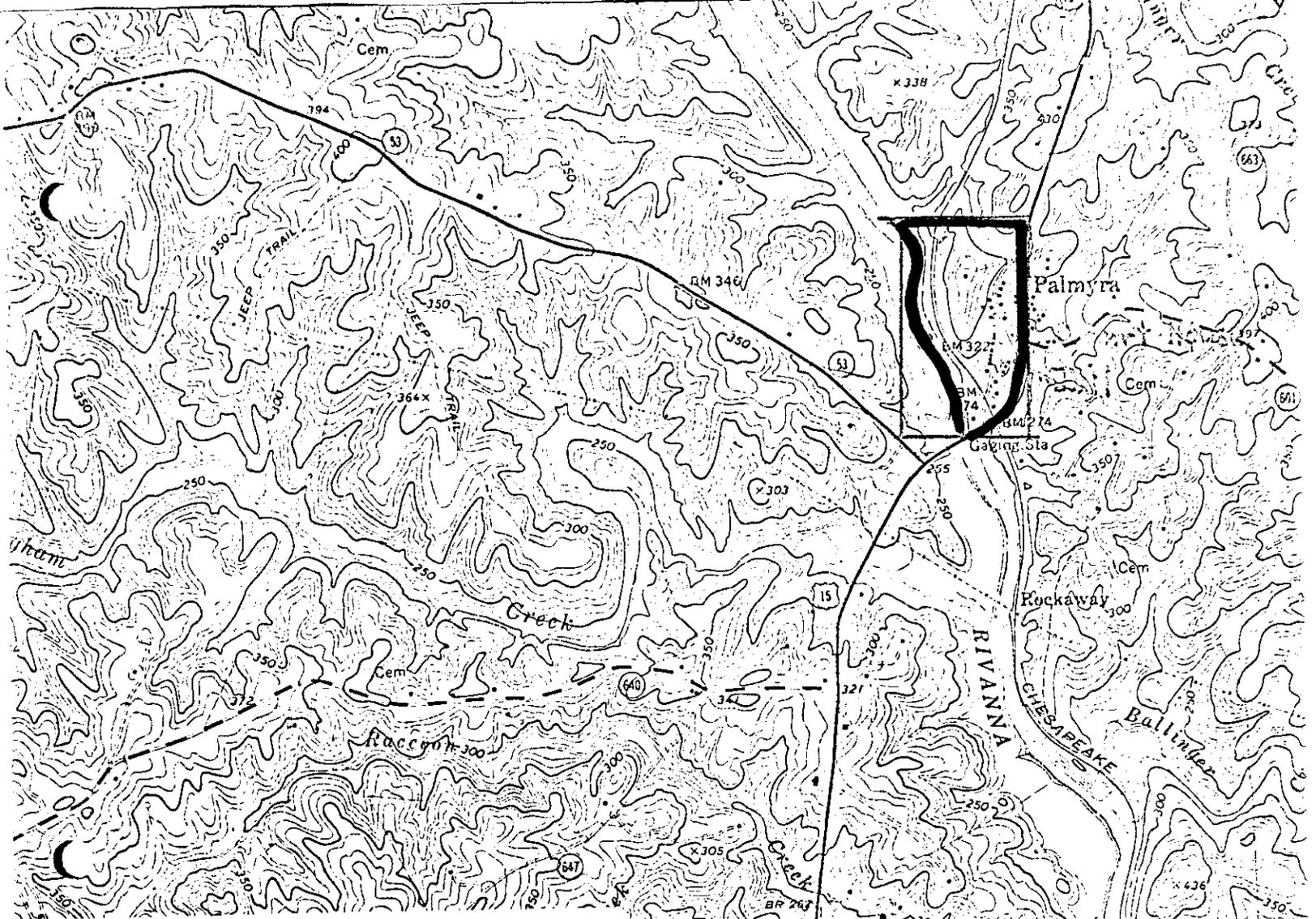
Date

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



U.S.G.S. 7½' quadrangle (Scale:1:24000)
 Palmyra, Va. 1967

Latitude	Longitude
NW 37° 51' 55"	78° 16' 09"
NE 37° 51' 55"	78° 15' 49"
SE 37° 51' 27"	78° 15' 49"
SW 37° 51' 27"	78° 16' 09"

