

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 _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Totomoi is situated in an isolated rural area of Hanover County and is approached through dense woods along a long dirt road. The house sits in a copse of ancient trees on the edge of an open expanse of cultivated fields with its farm buildings clustered near it. It is a two-story, three-bay building, probably built 1800, with an original gable-end lean-to, which was extended in the second quarter of the nineteenth century to connect with a small one-room, single-story ell set at right angles to the main block. The exterior of the rambling structure is clad with beaded weatherboards. The first floor of the main block has nine-over-nine sash with six-over-nine and four-over-four sash used in the second story, and large twelve-over-twelve sash in the ell. All of the windows have early louvered blinds. The main block is decorated with a modillion cornice, while the lean-to and ells have box cornices, and the whole house is covered with standing-seam sheet metal. A massive Flemish-bond brick exterior end chimney with double stacks and a second-floor pent stands against the lean-to (east) end of the main block, and smaller plastered brick exterior chimneys serve the lean-to and the ell. Three porches shelter doors into the cross hall of the main block. Those on the north and south are one-story, gable-roofed, shingled structures, with plaster cove ceilings and scrolled soffits in their tympani and are supported on slender chamfered posts. The principal portico is that on the west gable end. It is two stories high with a shallow, shingled gable roof, a modillion cornice, and four square stylized Doric piers on each level.

The main block is square in plan. It is, in effect, a double-pile, side-hall-plan house rotated ninety degrees so that the broad hall stretches across the front (west) with two rooms behind. The lean-to is divided into a series of small service rooms, and there is a single room in the later ell.

The hall is decorated with flush wainscoting, capped by an elaborate chair rail and with a punch-and-dentil cornice. The open-string dogleg stairs rise in the southeast corner of the hall. They have a molded banister, square newel, and two turned balusters to a tread. A high dado consisting of horizontal beaded boards of varying widths is carried up the lower run. Each of the three sets of exterior doors is hung on HL hinges and retains much of its early brass and its original beaded bar. The larger, or north, parlor is the more elaborately decorated of the two. Like the hall, it has flush wainscoting with a chair rail and a punch-and-dentil cornice. The handsome mantel consists of fluted Roman Doric pilasters supporting entablature blocks and a molded shelf with a wall-of-Troy fret cornice. The shelf is broken out over the entablature blocks and central tablet, and the entire frieze is vertically reeded. An early iron and brass fire frame remains in place.

The south parlor is also decorated with flush wainscoting and has a molded cornice which lacks punch-and-dentil work. The segmental-arched fireplace here is framed by a white plaster surround and an "eared" architrave, with a heavily molded, unsupported mantel shelf with punch-and-dentil work and reeding above. There is a closet in the northwest corner of the room with its own punch-and-dentil cornice and pulvinated frieze. The later ell is decorated with woodwork in the Greek Revival style. The doors and windows are framed with symmetrically molded trim and corner paterae, rather than the architrave frames which are used in the original section. A pedestal-type chair rail is carried around the room, and the fireplace is framed by a mantel with symmetrically molded pilasters supporting an entablature with plain blocks and tablet and by an unmolded mantel shelf which may be a replacement. Several early frame outbuildings and farm buildings survive near the house, including a smokehouse, a late-nineteenth-century laborers' cottage, a kitchen (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/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" 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 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

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Totomoi survives as a remarkably undisturbed eighteenth-century plantation with a frame dwelling house of considerable architectural interest. Over five hundred acres of the original land grant of 1689 to Thomas Tinsley I remain in the ownership of his direct descendant. This unbroken family tenure of nearly three centuries is among the oldest in Virginia. The present house is the third residence to serve the property and is a well-preserved example of rural Southern architecture of the Federal period. Picturesquely sited within an informal park containing outbuildings, a family cemetery, and very old trees, all surrounded by fields and woodlands, the house presents a memorable picture of life in old Virginia.

Thomas Tinsley I was originally from Sheffield, England. At the time he settled at Totomoi, the land was in New Kent County. The name of the plantation is derived from Totopotomoy, husband of the Queen of the Pamunkey Indians, who had been slain in a battle nearby in 1656 while assisting the colonists in resisting the Rikahecreans. Totopotomoy Creek flows adjacent to the plantation. Tinsley's use of the name may stem from the fact that he was instrumental with others in negotiating a treaty with the hostile tribes. Thomas Tinsley died in 1702 leaving the property to his son Thomas. It then passed down through Thomas Tinsley III, Thomas Tinsley IV, and Thomas Tinsley V.

Thomas Tinsley V, born in 1755, was married to Susanna Thompson. He served in the House of Burgesses and was instrumental in obtaining a clerkship for the young Henry Clay in his brother's law office. It was he who built the present house at Totomoi around 1795 to replace the second dwelling destroyed by fire. The house is distinguished by its plan, a variation of the side-hall plan with the hall entered by three exterior doors, one on the end and one on each side. This distinctive plan was employed for Federal-period houses in the South, both urban and rural; perhaps the most noted example is the Moses Myers House in Norfolk, Virginia. Other architectural features adding to Totomoi's interest are the rare early porches with scrolled eaves, and the two-level portico with its unusual louvered railing. The house preserves nearly all of its original fabric from sash to siding.

Thomas Tinsley V died in 1822. Totomoi then passed to Thomas Garland Tinsley (1788-1859) who added a wing to the house in 1820. During the War between the States, the place was owned by Thomas Garland Tinsley, Jr. (1825-1873). The area around the plantation saw considerable action during the war. On June 13, 1862, General J.E.B. Stuart passed through the vicinity with 1200 cavalry while on his memorable ride around the Federal army. In 1864 General Grant, attempting to take Richmond from the north, met stubborn resistance at Totopotomoy Creek and moved his army southeast to Cold Harbor.

Totomoi has survived to the present, little changed from its antebellum appearance. Where many surrounding farms have been engulfed by the suburban growth of Richmond, Totomoi's scenic open country yet evokes a nostalgic image of a rural life style disappearing from the area. The present owner of the plantation, Thomas Rutherford Moncure, son of the late Judge William A. and Margaret Tinsley (see continuation sheet # 1)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Tinsley, Milton R., Genealogical Sketch of the Tinsley Family. Deltona, Florida; privately printed, 1971.

Writer's Program of the Works Projects Administration in the State of Virginia; Virginia, Guide to the Old Dominion. New York: Oxford University Press, 1940.

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Archives.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 544 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	29,226,0	4,17,26,7,0	B	1,8	29,221,0	4,17,06,8,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,8	29,025,0	4,17,07,1,0	D	1,8	29,030,0	4,17,27,3,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The acreage comprising the Totomoi property is bounded by a line beginning at a point along State Route 643 .5 mile northwest of the intersection of State Routes 643 and 651, then following State Route 643 for approximately 4200 feet; then curving 300 feet to the southeast; thence extending 3300 feet south southwestward in a straight line to intersection with Totopotomoy Creek; thence following the creek for 6500 feet; thence extending 600 feet west northwestward; thence extending approximately 2600 feet in a straight line north northwestward, thence extending 1800 feet (See continuation sheet # 1)

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

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

February, 1976

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Junius R. Fishburne, Jr. Executive Director
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

Virginia Landmarks Register

TITLE

DATE

FEB 17 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DEC 12 1976

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

DEC 12 1976

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

National Register of Historic Places

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED DEC 12 1976

CONTINUATION SHEET #1

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE 1

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

(2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey
1967, 1976 (X) State
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
221 Governor Street
Richmond, Virginia

7. DESCRIPTION

and a number of late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century barns.
A small family cemetery lies in the yard a few feet northwest of the house.

DTU

8. SIGNIFICANCE

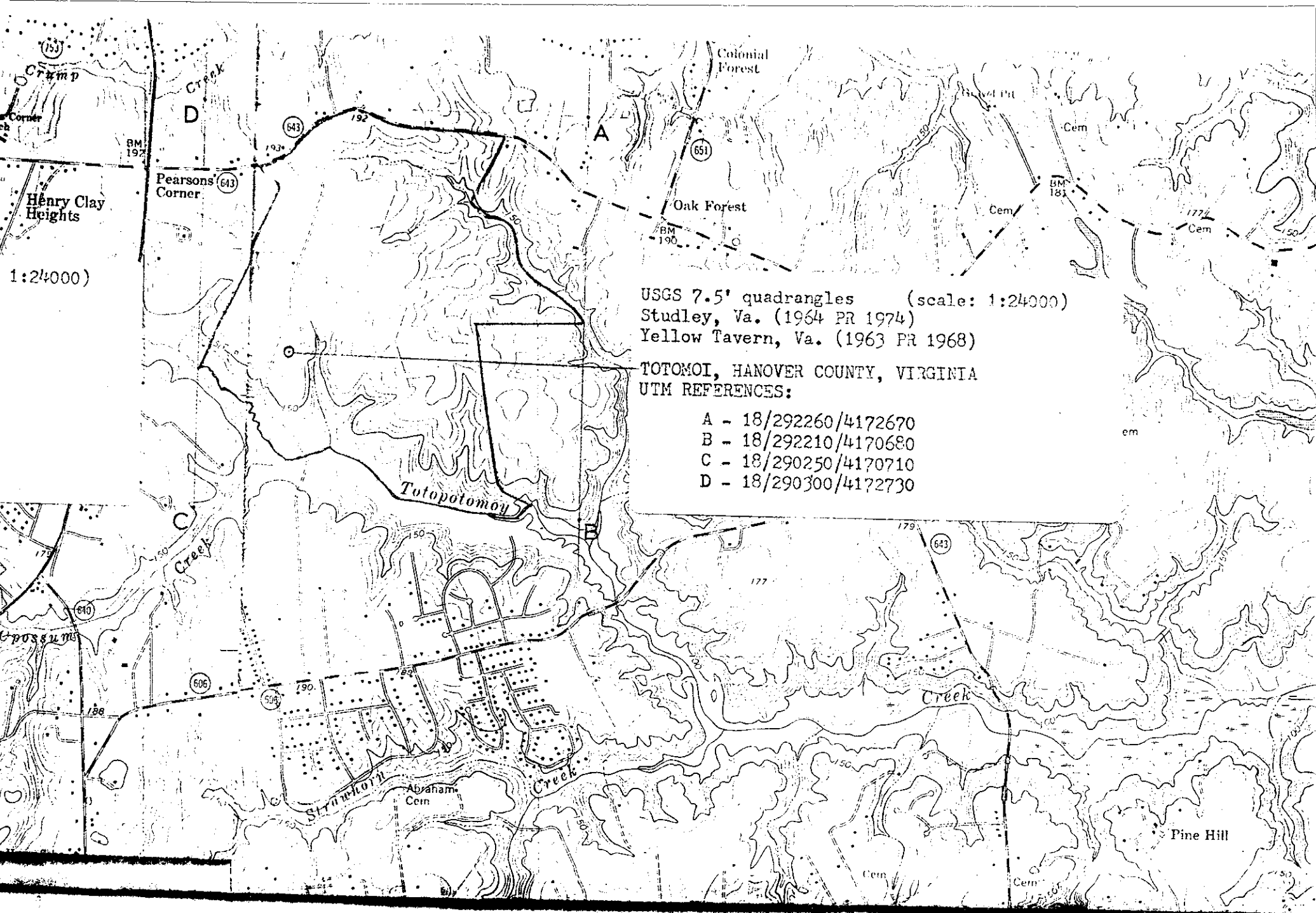
Moncure, is the tenth generation of the family to possess the property. The house is currently lived in by Mr. Moncure's daughter.

CCL

10. VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

eastward in a straight line and intersecting with intermittent creek, then following intermittent creek approximately 3000 feet, thence extending 1200 feet north northeastward in a straight line to point of origin.

1:24000)



USGS 7.5' quadrangles (scale: 1:24000)
Studley, Va. (1964 PR 1974)
Yellow Tavern, Va. (1963 PR 1968)

TOTOMOI, HANOVER COUNTY, VIRGINIA
UTM REFERENCES:

- A - 18/292260/4172670
- B - 18/292210/4170680
- C - 18/290250/4170710
- D - 18/290300/4172730