

VLR-4/17/79 NRHP-7/26/79

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED Jul 26 1979

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

Four Square (Preferred); Foursquare Farm

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

N side of 620; E side of 680

CITY, TOWN

Smithfield

X VICINITY OF

Fourth (Robert W. Daniel)

STATE

Virginia

CODE

51

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

COUNTY

Isle of Wight

CODE

093

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES. RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES. UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

(3) (See Continuation Sheet #1)

NAME

(1) Mrs. W. M. Cobb

Katherine A. Glenn (3/7/86)

STREET & NUMBER

Route 3

CITY, TOWN

Smithfield

VICINITY OF

STATE

Virginia 23430

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Isle of Wight County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Smithfield

STATE

Virginia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

(2) (See Continuation Sheet #1)

TITLE

(1) Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE

1969

X 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input 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

Four Square is a large, unusually complete plantation complex (southeast of Smithfield) in rural Isle of Wight County. The group consists of a large house built in 1807, eight domestic outbuildings, and a variety of barns and other farm buildings.

The house is a two-story L-shaped frame structure, five bays long on each of its major facades. It is clad with beaded weatherboards and lighted by 9/9 sash on the first floor and 9/6 sash on the second. The whole is covered by a low hipped roof embellished at the eaves by a dentil cornice. The front section is served by interior end chimneys with corbelled caps, while the ell has an exterior end chimney built of brick laid in Flemish bond up to a point seven courses below the lower of its two sets of short tiled weatherings. Above that point, common bonding is used suggesting that this chimney was rebuilt or repaired during a 20th-century renovation. The building is set on a low Flemish-bond brick underpinning. Near the north end of the west side of the underpinning are two bricks inscribed before their firing. The legend reads "Home Built Dec. 10 1807." In the reentrant angle, a one-story lean-to was added and extended to the north in the present century.

The plan of Four Square is a common one for houses of its configuration. There are three ground-floor rooms each separated from the others by stair passages. In effect, this is a central-passage, single-pile house with an original ell.

The interior decoration of Four Square uses late Georgian forms in an exaggerated manner. The east room of the front block, now the dining room, is decorated with recessed-panel wainscoting, a pedestal chair rail, and a light molded wooden cornice. The fireplace consists of a mantel having pulvinated bands of reeding treated on the sides as pilasters but continuing across the frieze, where the reeding is mitred downward in the center. Flanking the mantel are arched niches containing closets, and treated with fluted stylized Roman Doric pilasters.

The west front (living) room has the most elaborate woodwork. Recessed-panel wainscoting and a wooden punch-and-dentil cornice encircle the room. The principal interest, however, is the projecting chimney breast. It is decorated with a mantel with exceptionally broad, fluted Roman Doric pilasters. These support a frieze embellished with three scrolled brackets (of similar outsized proportions) acting as entablature blocks and central tablet. The whole is surmounted by a molded shelf broken out over the three frieze elements. An overmantel is in the same gargantuan style. A central molded panel is flanked by plain pilaster strips. The punched swags often found on pilasters in this style are here suggested by applied semicircular blocks with perforated edges.

Recessed-panel wainscoting is also employed in the ell room (bedroom). The mantel here is similar to that in the living room. Fluted pilasters are capped by square blocks, and the three scrolled consoles are of slightly more refined design. The whole is capped by a molded shelf curved in the center.

The two passages are treated in the same manner. Each has recessed-panel wainscoting encircling the walls and contains a plain open-string stair with two square balusters to a tread, a molded rail, and a square newel with a cap. The main passage stair is distinguished from the other by its simple scrolled brackets. The rear stair has no decoration on its string.

↑ panel balusters

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

NB - THESE PROBABLY NOT ORIGINAL - ORIGINAL INSCRIPTION (BETWEEN  
"LOWER WEATHERINGS, EARLY 19TH CENTURY") READS "Home Built Dec 10 1807"  
DU 5/1/81

# 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/ETHNIC/RELIGIOUS
<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 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

1807

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Four Square, a large complex in rural Isle of Wight County has one of Eastern Virginia's finest collections of outbuildings. This profusion of supporting structures is as impressive today as it was to earlier commentators. The Four Square house was built by the Woodley family in 1807 on land they had owned since the late 17th century. One of the wealthiest families in Isle of Wight County, their house ranks among the largest of its type surviving in southeastern Virginia. In keeping with its upper class history, Four Square in the late 19th century was famed for its owner's fox hunts.

Woodley tenure goes back to 1693 when Andrew Woodley paid 7000 pounds of tobacco to purchase a 640-acre tract on Cranage Swamp from James Baron. Two decades later, he deeded the tract to his son Thomas Woodley, a surveyor and navigator. In the mid-18th century the land passed to John Woodley and from him, in 1791, 440 of the 640 acres passed to his son, also named Andrew Woodley. (The other 200 acres were left to another son). A captain in the Virginia militia, Woodley served as Sheriff of Isle of Wight County, Collector of Revenue and Presiding Judge of the County Court. It was this Andrew Woodley who built most of the present complex. An early 20th-century writer, R. S. Thomas, quotes an elderly informant as saying that "it was Andrew Woodley who laid out the yards, built the spacious barns, smokehouses, cabins for the servants and the many other 'outbuildings'". Woodley also built a store, warehouses, and shops of various sorts. In the words of the Thomas' mother, Four Square in her day looked "like a busy village".<sup>1</sup>

Woodley apparently began the present house in 1807, the date inscribed in a brick in the underpinning. (The architectural evidence supports this date). Probably roughly contemporary with the house are the double dairy, the oldest section of the slave house, and possibly the double (frame) granary.

When the values of buildings were first listed separately from land values in the Isle of Wight land tax records (1821), Woodley's tract had a total of \$5000 worth of buildings on it, far more than any other property in the county. By this time, Woodley was actively expanding his holdings, and in addition to the 400-acre home tract Woodley was charged in 1822 with a 1293-acre parcel containing \$3000 worth of buildings and a mill seat with a \$2000 mill. He also owned another 595 acres on the James River, this with \$2400 worth of improvements on it. After his death in 1830 his son Andrew B. Woodley inherited these properties, combining the home tract with other small parcels into an 1162-acre holding. It was at this time that the name Four Square first appeared in the documents. Dr. Thomas Woodley inherited the property in 1833. In 1853 he sold Four Square to J. O. Thomas, his nephew. It was during Julius O. Thomas' lengthy tenure that Four Square became famous for the fox hunts led by its owner, who in 1904 celebrated fifty years as master of the hounds for the events. At that time, The Richmond Times Dispatch called the anniversary "The most important event that has happened in the United States--from a fox hunter's point of view."

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Four Square, Isle of Wight County, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET #1

ITEM NUMBER 4, 6 & 7 PAGE 1

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

- (2) Mr. and Mrs. Howard Glenn  
Foursquare Farm  
Route 3  
Smithfield, Virginia 23430
- (3) Mr. and Mrs. Bernard L. McGinnis  
Box 38  
Shipman, Virginia 22971

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

- (2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey  
1975 State  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission  
221 Governor Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

7. DESCRIPTION

Four Square's collection of outbuildings--both domestic and agricultural--is one of largest in Virginia. Like most farms in southeastern Virginia, the complex consists of a group of domestic outbuildings set within a fenced enclosure around the house, with farm buildings grouped a few hundred yards away.

Northwest of the house is a one-story gable-roofed frame office with a brick chimney. It was probably built in the mid-19th century. Closer to the house is a row of buildings which formerly included a kitchen located due north of the ell. East of the kitchen site there are a modern concrete-block pumphouse with an asphalt shingle roof; a gable-roofed frame double dairy, built in the early 19th century and ventilated with s-shaped balusters in the front and straight ones on the rear; a modern garage; and a mid-19th century frame smokehouse with a gable roof covered with wooden shingles and plain weatherboard cladding. Behind the row is a garden containing a small shed. The row is terminated by a frame double slave house set a few yards off from the rest and oriented with its gable running north-south. This structure, part of which is probably contemporary with the house, has a central chimney and is treated on the inside with horizontal chair-rail-height wainscoting. The walls above are bare studs and never had any covering. The north half is a mid-19th-century addition.

Moving south along the east side of the enclosure, there is a site of a now-demolished stable just outside the fence, a collapsed smokehouse at the fence line and another late 19th-century frame smokehouse clad in plain weatherboards and covered with a sheet-metal roof next to it.

\* = ORIGINAL TO HOUSE

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

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Four Square, Isle of Wight County, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET #2

ITEM NUMBER 7 & 8 PAGE 2

7. DESCRIPTION

The farm buildings stand outside the domestic enclosure to the northwest. There are five modern barns and two old granaries. One of these is an early 19th-century triple granary, consisting of three separate structures sheltered under a single continuous roof. South of these is a mid-19th-century log double granary. It is built the same way, with the two log pens separated by an open runway but tied together by a continuous gable roof. Early or original sheds along the long sides have been replaced by deeper modern ones, but the original sawn weatherboards on the roof survive.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The register bounds have been drawn to enclose the entire complex except for a 19th-century tenant house at the corner of the property which no longer belongs to it.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

J. O. Thomas died in 1912, leaving the property to his son, J. Waverly Thomas. The Cobb family, the present owners, bought Four Square in 1936.

MTP/DU

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<sup>1</sup>R. S. Thomas, Four Square and Fox Hunting (Richmond: privately printed, 1907)  
p. 9.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Crocker, James F. Woodleys of Isle of Wight. Portsmouth, 1915.  
 Isle of Wight County Deeds and Wills: Books I and II. Deed Books 2, 29, 32, 38; Will Books 6, 10, 18.  
Land Tax Books 1782-1838.  
 Thomas, R. S. Four Square and Fox Hunting. Richmond: privately published, 1905.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 12 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Smithfield, Va.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 

1,8	34,9	2,5,0	4,0	9,2	2,1,0
ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING		

B 

1,8	34,9	5,4,0	4,0	9,2	2,1,0
ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING		

C 

1,8	34,9	5,4,0	4,0	9,2	0,1,0
ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING		

D 

1,8	34,9	2,9,0	4,0	9,2	0,2,0
ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING		

E 

ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING		

F 

ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING		

G 

ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING		

H 

ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING		

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION Beginning at a point N of State Route 620 on E side of State Route 627 1600' N of intersection of said routes; thence extending E 900'; thence extending S 600' to State Route 620; thence extending approximately 650' W along N side of State Route 620; thence extending 200' NNW along W side of private drive; thence extending approximately

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES  
 250' W to E side of State Route 620; thence following said side of said route 400' NNW to point of origin.

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission DATE April 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 X 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 *[Signature]*

TITLE Tucker Hill, Executive Director DATE APR 17 1979  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

FOR NPS 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	

Magnet

Bethel Ch

Sewage Disposal Pond

U.S.G.S. 7.5' quadrangle (scale 1:24,000)  
Smithfield, Virginia 1968

FOUR SQUARE, Isle of Wight County, Virginia

UTM References:

A 18/349250/4092210

B 349540/4092210

C 349540/4092010

D 349290/4092020



Four Square

Champion

Gate

Trailer Park

BM 83

680

697

617

620

BM 85

258

620