

VLR-9/19/78 NRHP-4/20/79

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED Apr 20 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 Belle-Nemus, Belnemus, Bellenemus

AND/OR COMMON

Belnemus (Preferred)

2 LOCATION

4.6 miles NW of Powhatan; .6 mile N of Sallee Creek; 650' N of U.S. Route 60; 1.5 miles WNW of intersection of U.S. Route 60 and State Route 684.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Powhatan

VICINITY OF

Fifth (W.C. Daniel)

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Virginia

CODE

51

COUNTY

Powhatan

CODE

145

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT,

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Plunkett

d and Shan Douberly

6/44

STREET & NUMBER

Belnemus

4950 Anderson

Wayne

CITY, TOWN

Powhatan

VICINITY OF

STATE

Virginia 23139

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Powhatan County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Powhatan

STATE

Virginia 23139

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS (3) (See Continuation Sheet 1)

TITLE

(1) Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE

1939, 1940

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

Belnemus, set on a rolling tract of farmland in Powhatan County, is a three-part frame house built shortly before 1799, added to in the 1820s, and further enlarged in the 20th century. The original house, now the front portion, consists of a central two-story, three-bay element with flanking one-story, one-bay wings. On the first floor are 4/4 sash (probably 1820s replacements of original 9/9 sash, one of which is reused in the house) with 6/6 sash glazing the second story. All of the windows are enframed by louvred blinds. The main block's full-length, one-story porch, with its four Tuscan columns and lattice balustrade, is an early 20th-century replacement of an earlier full-length porch supported on thin, octagonal Greek Doric piers and embellished with a blind parapet. (The existence of the latter is attested to by a late 19th-century photograph in the owners' possession). Brick, semi-interior end chimneys serve both the central section and its wings. The latter are covered with gable roofs, while the former has a hipped roof topped by a remarkable pyramidal finial with a conical peak. All three parts have modillion cornices and are now covered with standing-seam sheet metal which replaces the round-butt shingles visible in the old photograph. The whole is set upon a cellar built of brick laid in Flemish bond with rodded joints and is covered with early 20th-century German siding.

Additions to the house include early 19th-century (probably 1820s) lean-to ells at the rear of the wings, a 20th-century porch at the west end of the west wing, a small 20th-century room off the northeast corner of the east wing lean-to and, most important, an enormous two-story frame ell at the rear. The latter is roughly square in plan and is covered with German siding and a low hipped roof with a modillion cornice. Three bays of large 6/6 windows pierce the first floor, with four bays of smaller 6/6 sash on the second. A two-level porch with square piers shelters the north and east sides of this ell.

The plan of the original section of Belnemus is very simple: there is a single room in each section. There is, in addition, one room in each of the two early 19th-century lean-tos. The latter formerly flanked a rear porch, which is now a hyphen passage containing the main stair and connecting the main block to the ell, in which there are four rooms.

The central section of the main block is the most elaborate. Encircled by a molded wood cornice and a pedestal chair rail, the room is heated by a fireplace in the east chimney breast. This chimney breast is enframed by an elaborately carved chimney-piece consisting of a bolection surround supporting tall stop-fluted entablature blocks with three bell-flowers each and a shelf broken out over the blocks and enriched with a double row of dentils. Over this is a crossetted overmantel panel surrounded by an applied guilloche. The whole is enframed by a pair of stop-fluted Roman Doric pilasters set on high bases and supporting a full entablature with triglyphs in the frieze, double dentils in the cornice, and wall-of-Troy fretting in the raking moldings of its triangular pediment. The west chimney breast contains an original closet and is treated in an awkward manner intended to make it a near reflection of the east chimney piece. The Roman Doric pilasters with their pediment are retained, as is the bolection surround to a non-existent fireplace opening. The cupboard, with its double eight-light glazed doors, rests on the surround and projects into the crossetted panel, which has an extra lateral jog in its stile molding to accommodate the width of the cupboard. The guilloche molding is carried around three sides of the panel but, interrupted by the cupboard, drops in a double strand to the top of the bolection surround. The double three-panel front and rear doors of this room have architrave frames surmounted by full entablatures and pediments similar to those on the chimney breasts.

The east wing is decorated with a double-beaded chairboard probably installed in the 1820s and by an apparently original Federal mantel consisting of reeded Roman Doric

(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 checked="" 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 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 Late 18th century

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Situated in the gently rolling Piedmont farmland of Powhatan County, Belnemus is an imposing late 18th-century plantation house of outstanding architectural significance. The three-part "Palladian" plan, the hipped roof with its unique finial, and the masterfully executed though provincially designed chimney breasts all combine to make Belnemus one of Virginia's foremost late Georgian houses. Further interest is added by the unusual variety of surviving outbuildings and particularly by the rare mid-19th century tobacco barn.

Belnemus was built sometime before 1799 by James Clarke. Clarke purchased 192 acres of land from Colonel William Mayo and his wife in 1783, adding 17 more acres from the same grantor in 1791. This is the tract upon which Belnemus stands. In 1799 the owner took out an insurance policy with the Mutual Assurance Society. This document described the house as it is now--with a central block 30 feet by 22 feet, flanked by two 16-foot-square wings. The house was valued at \$2250. In 1805 the same house, with the dimensions less accurately listed as 30 by 24 feet, was insured for \$3000 in a revaluation of the whole county.

Clarke died in 1831, leaving a substantial estate valued at over \$6000 and including several vehicles, mapping equipment, 16 slaves and "1 fiddle and bow." Clarke left his estate to four of his children, but litigation prevented its disposition for 23 years. Finally in 1854, the 480-acre tract was sold by a court-appointed commissioner to a George K. Moody, who sold it a year later to Pleasant Finch (d. 1859). Finch's family heirs owned Belnemus until the turn of the century, when it became the property of the Valentine family. It was the Valentines who remodeled the house to its present appearance. The current owners, Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Plunkett, have held the house for five years.

DJ/MTP

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Mutual Assurance Society Policies 322, 132, 1858.
 Old photographs in possession of the owner.
 Powhatan County Deed Books 1, 19.
 Powhatan County Land Tax Books 1782-1863.
 Powhatan County Will Books 8, 15.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 30 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Powhatan, Virginia

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 18	2 3 15	2 12 10	4 11 6 2	0 10 10	B	1 18	2 3 15	3 19 10	4 11 6 2	0 10 10
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING
C	1 18	2 3 15	4 18 10	4 11 6 1	9 16 10	D	1 18	2 3 15	3 19 10	4 11 6 1	6 16 10
E	1 18	2 3 15	2 17 10	4 11 6 1	6 17 10	F	1 18	2 3 15	1 17 10	4 11 6 1	8 19 10
G						H					

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION Beginning at a point 1100' N of U.S. Route 60 and 8300' W of the intersection of State Route 684 and U.S. Route 60; thence extending 600' E,S of the pond; thence extending 400' ESE; thence extending approximately 1000' SSW across private drive to U.S. Route 60; thence extending on the N side of said route 400' W; (See Contin-

uation Sheet #2)
 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

August 1978

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

[Signature]
 Tucker Hill, Executive Director
 Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE SEP 19 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

ATTEST: KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Belnemus, Powhatan County, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET #1

ITEM NUMBER 6 & 7 PAGE 1

6). REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

- (2). Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory
1958 Federal
Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
- (3). Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey
1967, 1973, 1978 State
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
221 Governor Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

7). DESCRIPTION

pilasters supporting recessed-panel entablature blocks and a molded shelf broken over the blocks and the reeded central tablet in an odd manner. Over the door to the lean-to room is an early 19th-century, nine-light sash which may have been used in that spot when the opening was a window and which may, therefore, provide a clue to the original sash type used on the first floor. The west wing has a pedestal chair rail dating from the 1820s as well as a Greek Revival mantel installed in the early 20th century as a replacement for the original. An old photograph depicts the mantel as being similar to that in the east wing except that the surround was treated with a delicately carved grapevine. The original stairs in Belnemus were located in the northwest and northeast corners of the east and west wings, respectively. These stairs were removed in the 1930s, and access to the second floor is now by means of a turn-of-the-century stair in the rear hyphen.

No other decoration of note survives in the house, except for a mantel in the rear ell. Removed from a house in an adjacent county, this early 19th-century piece has symmetrically molded pilasters supporting entablature blocks with applied urns and a central tablet with quadrant fans in the corners and with an eagle clutching a shield, an olive branch, and a cluster of arrows in the center.

The basement has a single room in each section. Of outstanding interest is the cooking fireplace in the west chimney of the central block; it is accompanied by a bake oven, an extremely rare survival in eastern Virginia.

Several outbuildings survive at Belnemus. Flanking the house forty feet from each end are the smokehouse and the dairy. Both are square pyramidal-roofed frame buildings with conical finials, and both have been re-covered with plain weatherboards. The interior of the dairy has been reworked as well. The flat-seam sheet metal roofs on the two mid-19th-century buildings may be original.

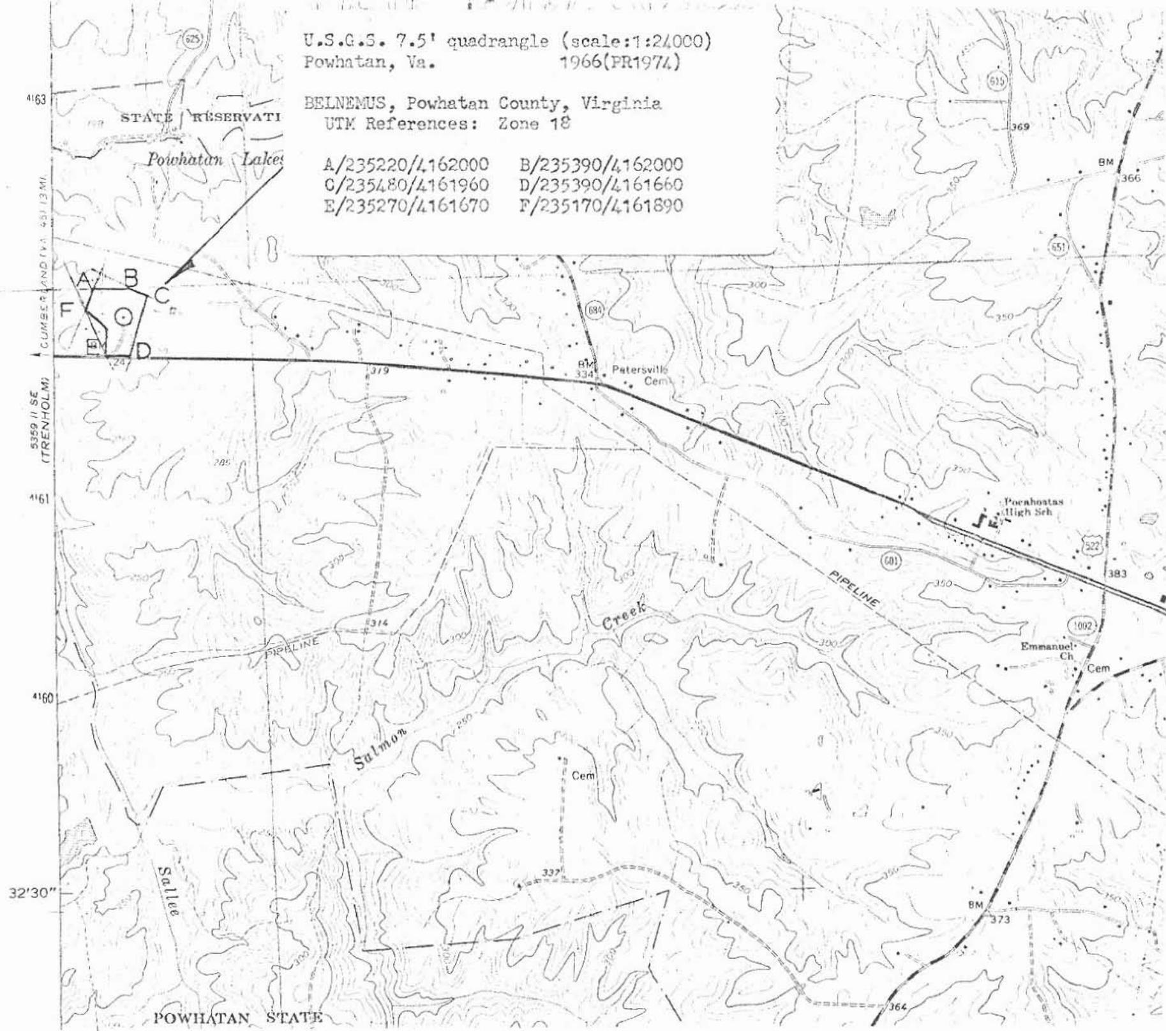
Northeast of the house is a small frame building with a gable roof. It was built at the turn of the century to house the equipment necessary to light Belnemus

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

U.S.G.S. 7.5' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)
Powhatan, Va. 1966(PR1974)

BELNEMUS, Powhatan County, Virginia
UTM References: Zone 18

A/235220/4162000	B/235390/4162000
C/235480/4161960	D/235390/4161660
E/235270/4161670	F/235170/4161890



4163

CUMBERLAND (VA.) 431.13 MI.

5359 II SE (TRENHOLM)

4161

4160

32'30"

POWHATAN STATE