

VLR-11/19/74 NRHP-12/19/74

Form 10-300  
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <b>Virginia</b>
COUNTY: <b>Powhatan</b>
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:  
**Keswick**

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: **.8 mile south of James River, .2 mile north of Route 711, 1.8 miles east of intersection of Routes 711 and 607.**

CITY OR TOWN: **(Powhatan Court House vicinity)** CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: **Fifth (W. C. Daniel)**

STATE: **Virginia** CODE: **51** COUNTY: **Powhatan** CODE: **145**

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input 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 type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: **Charles J. Keck**

STREET AND NUMBER: **Keswick Farm**

CITY OR TOWN: **Midlothian** STATE: **Virginia** CODE: **51**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS ETC.: **Powhatan County Court House**

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: **Powhatan** STATE: **Virginia** CODE: **51**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: **Historic American Buildings Survey**

DATE OF SURVEY: **1936, 1938, 1939, 1940** Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: **Library of Congress**

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington** STATE: **D. C.** CODE: **11**

STATE: **Virginia**

COUNTY: **Powhatan**

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7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Keswick is situated on the south bank of the James River, in the northeast corner of Powhatan County, with a small portion of the plantation lapping over into adjacent Chesterfield County. Almost directly across the river is Tuckahoe, which the Keswick house closely resembles in its H-shaped plan. Several of Keswick's outbuildings survive including an enigmatic circular structure long thought to have been slave quarters.

The dwelling house at Keswick, apparently constructed early in the nineteenth century, is a two-story, gable-roofed, frame-with-weatherboard building. It is supported on brick foundations and has a brick exterior end chimney on each gable. Each chimney has two sets of stepped weatherings and a corbelled cap. All of the brickwork is laid in three-course American bond.

The south wing is three bays wide, lighted by windows with plain architrave frames and nine-over-nine sash. The doorway also has a plain architrave frame and double three-panel doors with square panels at the top and two long rectangular ones underneath. Over the door is an odd elliptical fan decoration which is somewhat wider than the door itself. A flight of steps leads up to a gable-roofed porch supported by pairs of Doric colonettes echoed by pilasters. The soffit of the porch is elliptically vaulted to conform in size and shape with the decoration over the door, and the full entablature, with its plain frieze and denticulated cornice, is returned to the wall inside the vault. A simple box cornice crowns the facade, and tapered bargeboards rake the gables.

The north front is also three bays wide, but the lower left window has been changed. This elevation has double exterior doors, one into each of the two rooms in the north wing. A long, unroofed porch leads to them both, and a gable-roofed bulkhead in the lower east corner provides access to the cellar.

Another entrance is on the east side of the connecting wing in the southern of the two bays. This entrance has an architrave door frame sheltered by a distinctive gable-roofed hood with an ovoid cove of uncertain vintage. (A similar hood is over a door in the east gable of the north wing.) The west side of the connecting wing is covered by a two-story porch which is slightly recessed from the gables of the cross-wing.

In plan, the dwelling house at Keswick consists of two rooms, one larger than the other, in each of the end wings, with a stair hall occupying the whole of the connecting wing. (A bathroom has recently been installed in the northeast corner of this central hall, opposite the stairway.)

Keswick's interior woodwork is restrained in detail and in quantity, but it is skillfully executed. The most elaborate woodwork is in the south wing where the two rooms are separated by a magnificent doorway with an elliptical carved fan. The ceiling is tangential to the top of the fan, and the plaster cornice is broken accordingly. Small carved shells in the top rail of the door frame swing down to secure the pair of accordin doors. Each door consists of three leaves with three horizontal raised panels over a broad lock rail beneath which is a large panel, slightly taller than it is wide.

(see continuation sheet #1)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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(Continuation Sheet) #1

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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

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7. Description (continued)

In the west, or larger, room of this wing, the slightly projecting chimney face is decorated by a mantel consisting of a plain Tuscan pilaster on either side of the opening, a plain frieze, and an elaborately molded cornice and shelf. A plaster cornice and a symmetrically molded chair rail are carried around the room. The mantel in the east room of this wing is similar but somewhat more elaborate. The shelf molding is plainer, but the pilasters are molded. A tall elliptical medallion is carved in the frieze over each pilaster, and a long elliptical sunburst similar in style to the fan over the folding doors occupies most of the frieze over the fireplace opening. The room is skirted by a chair rail similar to that in the west room.

The stair hall in the connecting wing is decorated by a chair rail with a bead on each edge and a simple torus molding is used. The stairs, in the northwest corner, are plain with two square balusters to a tread.

Keswick's outbuildings are to the east and north of the house, between it and the river. Beginning with the southeastermost building and proceeding counterclockwise, they include a well house, a smoke house, the circular "slave quarters," a kitchen, a two-story brick house, a shed, and a laundry.

The original function of the circular building is undetermined. Built in three-course American bond, with thirteen-foot high walls, the structure is about thirty-five feet in diameter. Its conical roof is surmounted by a six-foot high, five-foot diameter circular chimney. Plain frames and rowlock lintels enclose the door and the five windows with their six-over-six sash. These openings divide the circumference into six regular arcs, and the three fireplaces in the central stack are each directly on axis with a window. The present floor is dirt, but a brick floor reportedly lined the interior at one time. Scars on the interior walls reveal the former existence of a gallery eight-and-one-half feet from the present floor, and it is claimed in an article written thirty-five years ago that structural evidence of the gallery's division into sixteen compartments could be seen at that time.

The two-story building has a parapet gable roof and interior end chimneys with corbelled caps, and is laid in Flemish and three-course American bond. One source suggests that this was an overseers house; others claim that it was the original, mid-eighteenth century dwelling house, but the nineteenth-century-style brickwork with its absence of any glazing, gauging or water table belies this. The front of the house is three bays wide at second-floor level, but four at first-floor level, the two center bays being occupied by doors. This scheme reflects the north facade of the main house, which the brick dwelling faces across the yard. The rear elevation is two bays wide. The windows all have six-over-six sash and louvered blinds. In plan, the structure is a Tide-water hall-and-parlor house with a large western room and a closed stairway running from back to front against the inner partition of this room. The only variation from the type is the existence of an outside door into each room. The east second-floor room has a plain early-republican-style mantel and battened closet doors in which the alternate vertical planks are reeded.

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(Continuation Sheet) #2

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7. Description (continued)

The laundry is also a brick building one-story high laid in three-course American bond, with a hipped roof and a central chimney with corbelled cap. The facade is divided into four bays; the outside two are doors, and the inner two are windows with six-over-six sash and louvered blinds. The kitchen, except for being gable-roofed and having an exterior end chimney, is a half-version of the laundry.

The smokehouse is a square frame building covered with flush boarding. It features a box cornice, a high pyramidal roof, and a batten door with long strap hinges. Also on the grounds are the graves of Major John Clarke, the probable builder of Keswick, and his granddaughter, Rosabelle Burfoot.

DTU

8. 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)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |                                                  |                                                 |                                                              |                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political                           | <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture  | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture                           | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Political Science | _____                                    |
| <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

Keswick is an important component of a distinguished group of eighteenth and nineteenth-century plantations lining the James River above Richmond. It is individually significant for its distinctive plantation complex containing a notable collection of outbuildings which includes an enigmatic circular structure whose original function has not been determined. With its varied forms and apparent single building period, the complex has much to teach about the physical layout and social organization of early-nineteenth-century plantation life. The main house is important both for its fine woodwork and for its unusual H-shaped plan. This plan was influenced by Tuckahoe, the famous colonial plantation house built just across the river almost seventy years earlier. The Keswick house stands, then, as graphic evidence of the regional and temporal unity of James River society.

Architectural evidence indicates that the Keswick buildings were erected sometime early in the nineteenth century by Major John Clarke (1766-1844) on land inherited from his father (or grandfather) Charles Clarke. The younger Clarke founded the Bellona Arsenal on the Chesterfield portion of his property, and reportedly built the State Armory (1794) at Gamble's Hill and Latrobe's State Penitentiary, both in Richmond.

If a structural evolution of the erection of the buildings at Keswick were to be offered, it would not be unreasonable to suggest that the brick house, with its slipshod brickwork, was erected hastily for the accommodation of the family while a new dwelling house, possibly on the site of an earlier one, was built. The parapeted gables, jack arches, Flemish-bond facade, and traditional plan and stairs of the brick building argue for its being slightly earlier than the main house and its other outbuildings. The main house, as mentioned above, is a slightly smaller version of the Tuckahoe form. Unlike Tuckahoe, the stairs at Keswick are in the connecting, rather than the end wings. The similarity between the north facade of the frame main house and the south facade of the brick building surely represents some attempt at the formal unification of Keswick's buildings. The circular building is a total mystery. It seems unlikely that a building so close to the house would be used as slave quarters, but there is a strong tradition that this was its function. More probably it was used for some sort of specialized processing as yet undetermined.

At the death of John Clarke, his three daughters and two grandchildren inherited the property. In the 1870's, a John S. Bellamy began buying shares of Keswick from the heirs, and in 1884 was awarded a total of 465 acres of

(see continuation sheet #3)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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8. Significance (continued)

it through a chancery suit, Carrington and Bellamy v. Archer et. al., in the Circuit Court of Chesterfield County. Bellamy's heirs held the estate until 1930, when it was sold to G. C. Kirkmeyer. Keswick changed hands several more times until it was acquired by its present owners.

DTU

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Historic House Open for Tour," Richmond Times-Dispatch, October 24, 1968.  
 Ryan, E. L., "'Keswick'- In Powhatan," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Volume 48, 1940, pp. 57-60.  
 Stanard, Mary Newton. Richmond: Its People and Its Story. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1923.  
 Weaver, Bettie Woodson, "History in Towns - Midlothian, Virginia," Antiques, Volume 96, October 1969, pp. 588-591.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES			
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE			
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	37°	34'	04"	77°	40'	33"
NE	37°	34'	04"	77°	39'	12"
SE	37°	33'	13"	77°	39'	12"
SW	37°	33'	13"	77°	40'	33"

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 183 acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
Virginia	51	Chesterfield	041
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
 Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission      DATE: November 1974

STREET AND NUMBER:  
 221 Governor Street

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

Name: Junius R. Fishburne, Jr.  
 Junius R. Fishburne, Jr., Exec. Director  
 Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission  
 Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: NOV 19 1974

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

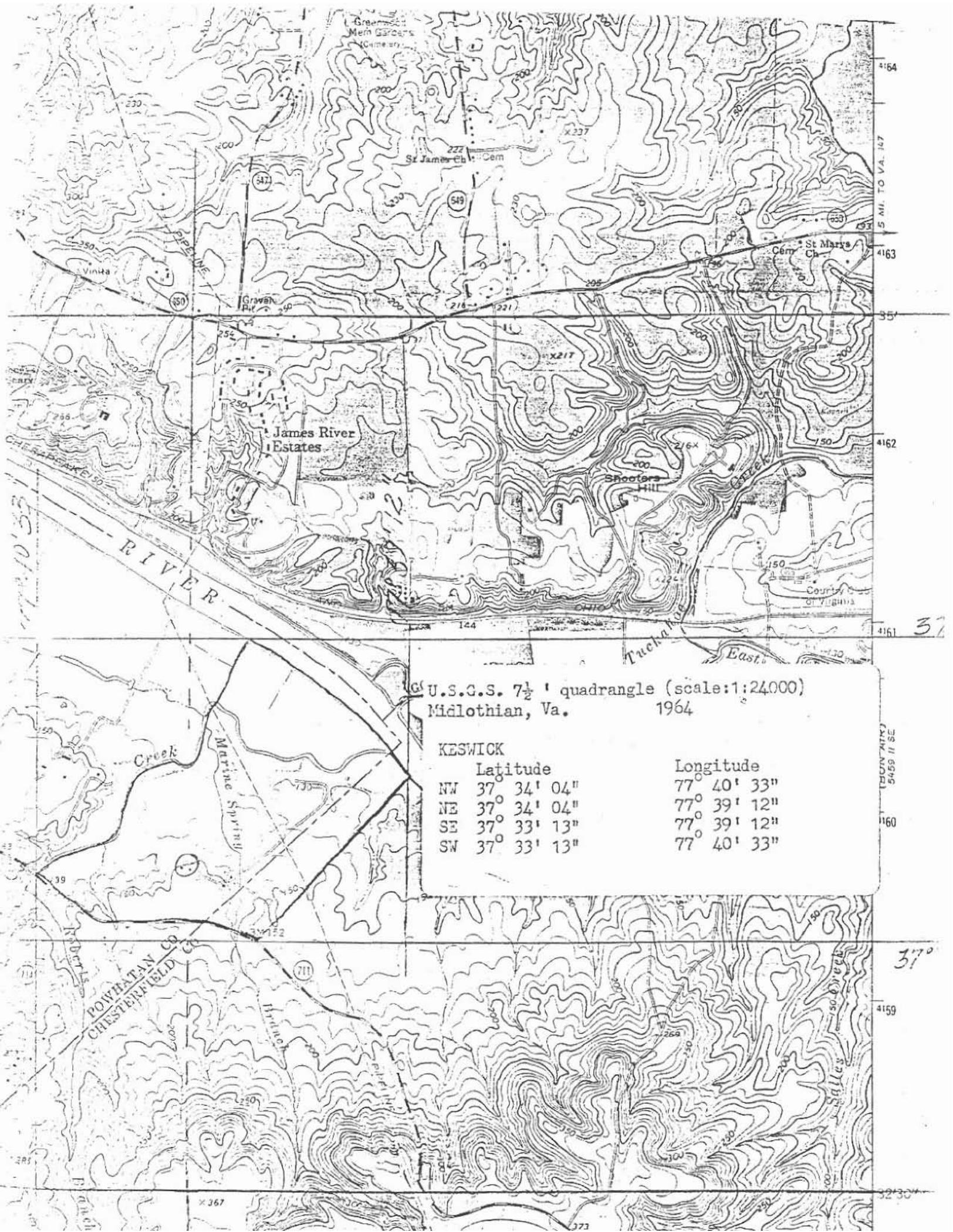
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



U.S.C.S. 7 1/2' quadrangle (scale: 1:24,000)  
 Midlothian, Va. 1964

KESWICK

	Latitude	Longitude
NW	37° 34' 04"	77° 40' 33"
NE	37° 34' 04"	77° 39' 12"
SE	37° 33' 13"	77° 39' 12"
SW	37° 33' 13"	77° 40' 33"

4164  
 5 MI. TO VA. 147  
 4163  
 35'  
 4162  
 4161  
 37  
 160  
 4159  
 32'30"

150' 0" 33'

(BONARK)  
 5459 II SE

37°

x367

372