

VLR-9/15/99 NRHP-12/22/99

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts, See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name —Provost_____

other names/site number __Oakville_____ DHR File # 072-0055_____

2. Location

street & number __4801 Cartersville Road_____ not for publication
city or town __Powhatan_____ vicinity X
state __Virginia__ code VA county Powhatan—Code 145__ zip code 23139__

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Reservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide X locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

M. Carter Senese _____ 11/12/99
Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau
In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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4. National Park Service Certification

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I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register _____
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the _____
National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the _____
National Register
- removed from the National Register _____
- other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

=====

5. Classification

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Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 sites
<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 structures
<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 objects
<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- a owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- b removed from its original location.
- c a birthplace or a grave.
- d a cemetery.
- e a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- f a commemorative property.
- g less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce _____
 Architecture _____

Period of Significance Ca. 1800 - 1945 _____

Significant Dates Ca. 1800 , 1867, 1902 _____

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A _____

Cultural Affiliation N/A _____

Architect/Builder Unknown _____

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property Approximately 61 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	__	_____	_____	3	__	_____
2	__	_____	_____	4	__	_____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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11. Form Prepared By

=====

name/title Ruth Doumlele with John G. Zehmer and Ann M. Andrus,
 Virginia Department of Historic Resources
 organization _____ date June 1999

street & number 2510 Chastain Lane telephone 804-379-0777

city or town Midlothian state VA zip code 23113-9400

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Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage
or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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Property Owner
=====

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name _____Margaret Palmore_____

street & number_4801 Cartersville Road_____ telephone_804-598-3454__

city or town_Powhatan_____ state_VA__ zip code _23139_____

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 1

Provost
Powhatan County, Virginia

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Summary Description:

Provost, a frame dwelling believed to have been started ca. 1800, stands near the southwestern corner of Bell Road and Cartersville Road, (Route 684), just north of Cosby Road (Route 621) in the rural north-central section of Powhatan County, Virginia. The house and its associated outbuildings are located at the northern end of a 61-acre tract of land. They are grouped in a spacious yard enclosed with a white picket fence along Cartersville Road and with wire fencing along Bell Road. The property is shaded by a two-hundred-year-old mulberry tree and by mature oaks. The oak trees probably were the source of the property's early name, *Oakville*. The house's location at the crossroads of the main stage coach route west from the capital at Richmond and the Powhatan/Cartersville route meant it was ideally situated to serve a variety of public needs in the community. In the mid-nineteenth century, the main building was enlarged to serve as a general store that operated there from at least 1867 until about 1945. In 1902 a post office was established there under the name of Provost and the main building was again enlarged to provide space for the post office and the postmaster's office. The post office operated there until 1939. A telephone exchange was established at Provost in the 1920s. From 1933 to 1945 Provost was the local office for the Virginia Bureau of Vital Statistics, recording county births and deaths and sending the information to Richmond. Today, Provost is again a private residence and is lived in by the Palmore family, descendants of Samuel Palmore who served as a clerk in the general store and postmaster of Provost. A smokehouse with attached wash house (formerly a blacksmith shop), a corn house and a machine shed make up the contributing outbuildings.

Architectural Analysis

The house, believed to have been started ca. 1800, is a weatherboarded frame dwelling on a brick foundation. The original house—the eastern-most three bays of the current building—was a 1 ½ story dwelling with shed roofed dormers. It featured a center hall flanked by a single room to the east and to the west of the hall. A one-room ell was located behind the east room and a full basement was contained below the two east rooms. A small brick chimney stack toward the center of the roof ridge marks the location of what was once an exterior gable-end chimney.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 2

Provost
Powhatan County, Virginia

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The main (north) elevation of the house is asymmetrically arranged in six bays, with the second and fifth bays from the left containing entrances. Each entrance is sheltered by a modest porch supported on brick piers, with wooden posts and matchstick balustrades. Large six-over-six wooden double-hung sash are set in mitered, shallowly molded surrounds and are flanked by wooden plank shutters. Across the rear (south) elevation of this section is a shed-roofed addition set on a brick and concrete foundation. At the west end this addition terminates in an enclosed rear porch.

Provost, first known as Oakville, was built on the main river road, a well-known stage coach route to the west from Richmond. It stands at the intersection of the main river road with Bell Road, part of the stage coach route from Powhatan to Cartersville, a river town to the west. The original part of the house may have been built by Martha Taylor Smith and her husband, Thomas Smith, on land bequeathed to her by her grandfather in 1772. The house's strategic location lends credence to the oral history tradition that early in its history the house served early on as a stagecoach stop and an ordinary, licensed to serve the public from within a dwelling. Historical research has so far confirmed that the property was used as a store/ordinary as early as 1867.

The form of the original portion of the house could well have supported a public/private use. The central hall in the original three-bay portion of the house separates what was originally a single room to the west from a larger living space to the east. A dormer room over the west side of the original building provided storage space. It was accessed by a ladder through a trap door. The trap door with its hasp and heart-shaped lock is still in place.

The largest addition to Oakville—a three-bay, 1 ½-story addition (now the third, fourth and fifth bays in the present 1 ½ story section)—was made in the mid-nineteenth century to accommodate a general store. The dormer rooms in this western addition were a part of the store and that space was accessible from the outside by way of an exterior stair at the west gable end. Infill in the weatherboards below the existing west gable end window marks the location of what was originally a second-floor entrance. The oversized store entrance serves today as the main entrance to the house. Several of the windows in this section of the house contain hand-blown glass. Photographs of the store from about the turn of the century show a 1 ½ -story building with a simple shed-roofed porch sheltering the entrance to the store.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 3

Provost
Powhatan County, Virginia

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In 1902, Oakville was established as a branch post office by the United States Post Office Department and its name was changed to Provost. At this time, the general store section of the house was extended approximately eight feet to the rear (south) to accommodate the post office and a private office for the postmaster. Also about this time, a shed room was added to the rear first-floor east room, for use as a nursery. Provost served as a post office until 1939 when it was merged with the post office at Belona.

In the 1920s Provost was expanded to provide more living space. The eastern-most dormer room was raised to two full stories, a room was added over the first floor shed room, and a passage was added along the side to provide separate access to each of the second-floor rooms. This two-story section has an asphalt-shingle roof featuring partial returns at the gable ends. The two-story section is one-bay wide at the front and three bays deep. The shouldered brick chimney on the east end wall was also raised in height. The stack of what was originally a chimney serving a kitchen fireplace (now preserved behind new walls in the east rear basement room) is present on the ridge. A later addition supported on a concrete block foundation was made to the south gable end. A porch similar to those on the main elevation shelters a rear entrance at the south gable end.

Today, the main floor of the 1 ½ -story section of the house serves as the owner's living area. It has been extensively modernized to contain a kitchen, a spacious living room with rear dining area, a bedroom, and a bath.

The original entrance hall remains largely intact, containing a stair, with winders leading to the basement and to the upper floor. The main floor of the two-story east section retains its original two-room configuration, utilized now as a small apartment with the kitchen housed in the shed room at the south end.

The upper floors of both sections do not appear to have been extensively altered, and one fireplace mantel, a simple Greek Revival one, remains intact in the rear east room. All but one of the fireplace openings in the house have been filled in or covered. The upper floor of the 1 ½-story section is divided into two spaces. The space nearest the hall contains the trap door with heavy iron bolt hinges and a heart-shaped lock. The room at the west end retains its original wall and ceiling finish of wide, horizontal planking.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 4

Provost
Powhatan County, Virginia

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Associated with the house are three contributing outbuildings, arranged informally to the south and west. Directly south of the house is a one-room frame building said to have been a blacksmith shop, which later became the smokehouse. Attached to it is a simple frame wash house. It is covered with asbestos siding and features six-light windows. Directly west is a one-room gable-roofed corn house. To the northwest of this building is a six-bay equipment shed, with the center bays open on the east side.

There is a vegetable garden and an orchard behind the smokehouse. A well house, a non-contributing structure, is situated directly behind the house and is shaded by the old mulberry tree. A white picket fence sets the front yard off from the road; within the yard are boxwood bushes and other shrubs as well as a slate grave stone for Samuel Hobson Royall (born 10/14/1844; died 11/30/1895) now used as a stepping stone. Samuel Hobson Royall was the grandfather of J. G. Palmore, the last of the Provost general store's proprietors. The stone was placed on the grounds when a larger marble gravestone was erected for Samuel Hobson Royall and his wife, at the time of her burial.

The house is well maintained by the Palmore family, descendants of the storekeeper and postmaster at Provost .

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 5

Provost
Powhatan County, Virginia

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Summary Paragraph

Provost, an early 19th-century frame house in north central Powhatan County, Virginia was first known as Oakville. The house sits at the intersection of Routes 684 and 621, two roads that were once part of the early stage coach route from Richmond and the route from Powhatan to Cartersville, a river town to the west. Provost served a variety of public needs during the 19th and 20th centuries as a general store, ordinary, post office and telephone exchange. The earliest known date for an ordinary/store at Provost is 1867. That store, adding other services as required, operated under various owners until about 1945 when Provost again became a private dwelling. From 1902 until 1939 Provost also served as a post office and in 1920 became a telephone exchange. From 1933 until 1945 Provost served as a branch of the Commonwealth of Virginia's Bureau of Vital Statistics. Provost is historically significant under Criterion A, as a property associated with events that have made a contribution to the broad patterns of history in the areas of local commerce and trade and government and political activity between 1867 and 1945. Throughout its history, the owners of Provost adapted the building to serve new uses and provide additional services for the community. The history of those changes at Provost gives evidence of the changing social patterns and community needs of rural Powhatan County—and rural Virginia—in the mid-19th and 20th centuries. Those changing needs are also reflected in Provost's physical appearance and it is therefore eligible at the local level under Criterion C for architecture.

Historical Background

The land on which Provost stands is part of 400 acres patented by John Taylor. The land was conveyed on September 17, 1731 for 40 shillings, "in this our colony and dominion of Virginia." It became known as Taylor's Seat. In 1758, Taylor devised part of his property to his granddaughter, Martha Taylor, and in 1772 her father gave her the piece of land her grandfather had bequeathed her. Martha Taylor married Thomas Smith and in 1793 they sold the Provost property to Robert Taylor. It is uncertain which of these owners built Provost. A countywide survey conducted for the Virginia Department of Historic Resources in 1991 estimates Provost's date of construction as circa 1783. A Mutual Assurance Society policy written for Robert Taylor in September 1802 notes the value of his house—a one-story frame dwelling underpinned with brick—and barn as \$1200.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 6

Provost
Powhatan County, Virginia

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In 1825, Robert Taylor devised to his daughter-in-law, Polly I. Taylor, his son Charles' widow, "the land lying on the west side of the courthouse road on which is situated my mansion house" and approximately 200 acres. The Provost property later came into the possession of Polly's son, Blagrove Taylor (d. 1861) and his wife, Amanda (Ligon) Taylor.

In 1867, Pleasants & Tilman "Retail Liquor Merchants," received their first license to sell liquor at Oakville. James Pleasants and James Tilman, Merchants and Partners, trading as Pleasants and Tilman, operated the general store from 1867 until the partnership was dissolved in 1872. In 1873 James A. Tilman and his wife, Mattie, deeded approximately eight acres of the property, the house and store to J. C. Bowles, who married S. A. Pleasants, the widow of Tilman's partner. J.C. Bowles was granted licenses to retail "ardent spirits" at his home at Oakville from May 1876 to 1888. James C. Bowles and others sold 12+ acres, the store and dwelling house and other buildings to C. L. Dodd in February 1895.

The store sold housewares, sewing materials, foods and medicinal preparations and maintained open accounts with customers. Among items purchased on account in 1884 by one local resident were fabrics, syrup, coffee, pen points, sugar, bluing and starch. A partial payment on account consisted of 10 hens at 30 cents each for a total credit of \$3.

In 1895 Samuel Palmore became a clerk in the store and in 1899 he purchased the store tract for \$1100. Palmore expanded the store's services, selling horse collars and harnesses and even provided some doctoring for his customers using carbolic acid, liniment and laudanum.

On July 4, 1902, the United States Post Office Department appointed Samuel Palmore as postmaster and established a post office named Provost. The general store was expanded eight feet to the south, to provide space for the post office and a private office for the postmaster. Throughout the Great Depression, many Powhatan County men went to prison for "bootlegging," their only means of making money. Family members brought cookies, muffins, etc. to be wrapped, addressed and sent by the Provost postmaster to the prison in nearby Goochland County. The post office operated at

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 7

Provost
Powhatan County, Virginia

Provost until 1939 when it was closed and its services were merged with the post office at Belona.

As a post office, Provost became even more of a commercial center, offering in addition to postal services, sophisticated medical prescriptives, dental services and providing outside space for vegetable vendors. Occasionally, the general store provided services of a more personal nature. Palmore family members tell a story about Palmore's wife, Mattie, who helped at the store. On one occasion a woman delivered a baby en route to the store. "Miss Mattie" cleaned the baby, wrapped it in clean cloths and the customer returned home after completing her purchases.

There was no bank in Powhatan, so Palmore on occasion served residents by lending money or purchasing land. Between 1898 and 1930 he increased his holdings from about 12 acres to 75 acres.

The Palmores employed a craftsman named Charlie Denoon, who slept in the upper room next to the chimney and the trap door during the winter. His relative, Colonel Charles Denoon, Confederate States of America, wrote letters home between 1861 and 1864, when he died at the Battle of the Crater in Petersburg. Charlie kept the letters at Provost and the present owner, Margaret Palmore, has compiled and published them in a book called "Charlie's Letters."

In 1920, communications patterns in the county began to change when the James River Telephone Company extended its service through Powhatan County. Mr. Palmore purchased and installed telephone equipment and rented it and Provost became a telephone exchange. There were twenty trunk lines. The operator connected calls between Cartersville and Cumberland with the Midlothian switchboard, which then connected the calls to Richmond.

Also around 1920 Palmore purchased a barber chair, which was used as a dentist's chair. Palmore applied laudanum, pulled the tooth with "needlepoint" pliers, rubbed whiskey on the gums and charged \$1 for the service. As travel became easier, the dental service closed and the barber business opened, operated on Saturdays by Carnis Shepherd.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 8

Provost
Powhatan County, Virginia

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Between 1933 and 1945 Provost served yet another purpose. In an arrangement with the Commonwealth of Virginia, it became a local office for the Bureau of Vital Statistics, recording births and deaths in the county and sending the information to Richmond. During this time, Virginia's Racial Integrity Law was in force. Local registrars—at the direction of Dr. W. A. Plecker, head of the State Bureau of Vital Statistics—classified as black all Native Americans and all individuals having other than purely Caucasian blood. This practice was followed when issuing birth, death and marriage certificates and when registering children for school.

About the end of World War II with J. G. Palmore (son of Samuel Palmore and husband of the current owner) as proprietor, the general store was closed and Provost once again became a private residence. Today, Provost is home to the third and fifth generations of Palmores, Mrs. Margaret Palmore and her grandson, Douglas Palmore and wife Jennifer. The house is maintained in excellent condition.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 9, 10 Page 9

Provost
Powhatan County, Virginia

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Bibliography:

County and State Records

- Cumberland County Will Books
- Powhatan County Common Law Book
- Powhatan County Court Records, File Drawer 102
- Powhatan County Deed Books
- Virginia State Land Office Patents

Cultural Resource Group - Louis Berger & Associates, Inc. "Phase II Architectural Evaluation Route 684, Powhatan VA." 1992.

EHT Tracerics, Inc. "Powhatan County, Virginia: Historic Architectural Survey." 1991.

Houck, Peter W. and Mintcy D. Maxham. *Indian Island in Amherst County*. Lynchburg, VA: Warwick House Publishing, 1993.

UTM References:

	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>		<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
1	18	236680	4166020	6	18	236690	4165290
2	18	236790	4165800	7	18	236580	4165240
3	18	236680	4165800	8	18	236620	4165140
4	18	236780	4165470	9	18	236590	4165080
5	18	236700	4165450	10	18	236340	4165550
				11	18	236270	4165920

Verbal Boundary Description:

Provost and its nominated 6 acres is identified as Parcel 40, Section 14, Macon District, on the Powhatan County tax parcel map.

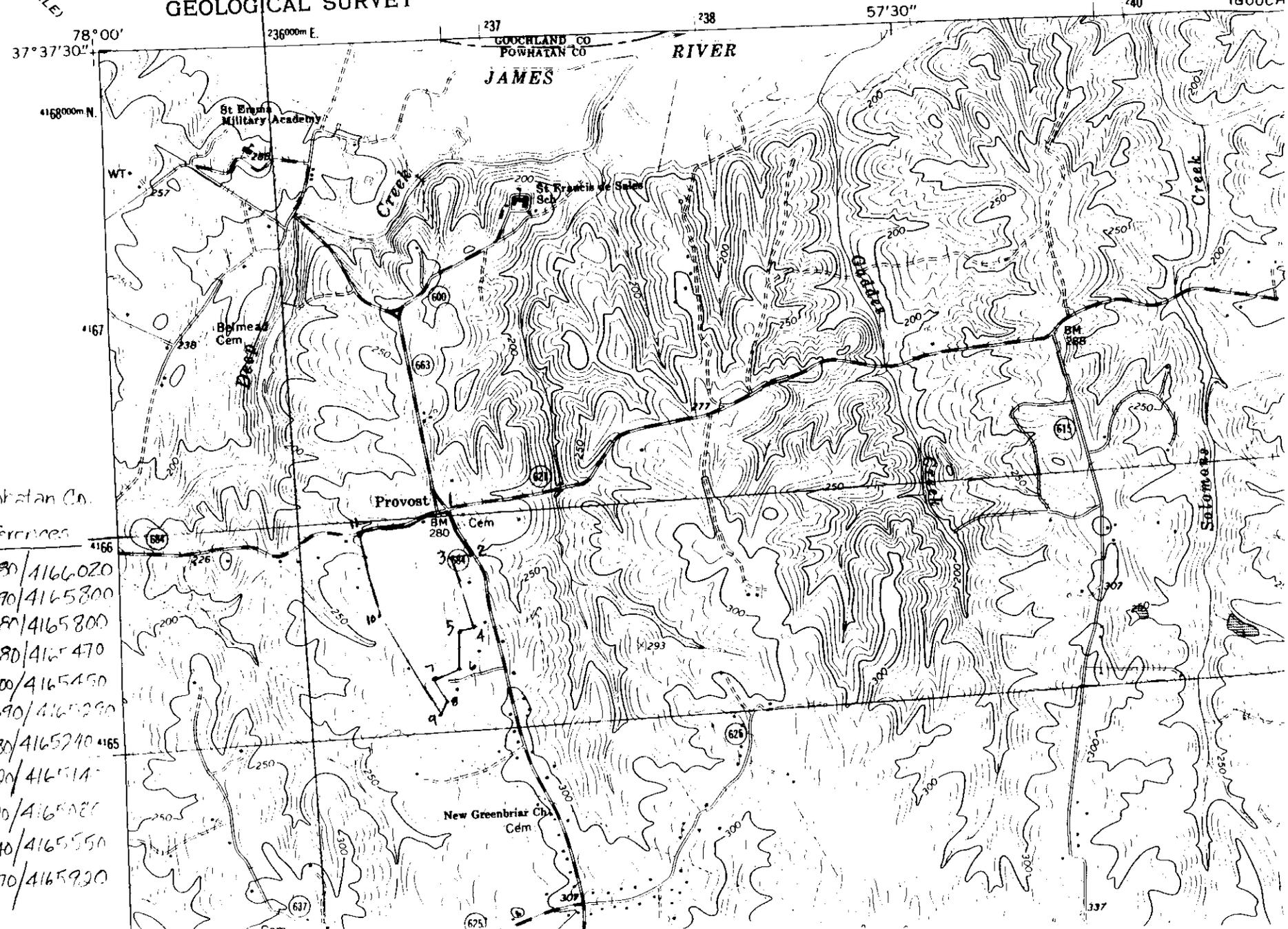
Boundary Justification:

The nominated boundaries include 6 acres of the property historically associated with Provost, including the main house and related outbuildings.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

5359 IINE
(CARTERSVILLE)

5459 I
(GOOCH)



Provost, Powhatan Co.

UTM References

- 1. 18/236680/4166020
- 2. 18/236790/4165800
- 3. 18/236680/4165800
- 4. 18/236780/4165470
- 5. 18/236700/4165450
- 6. 18/236690/4165290
- 7. 18/236580/4165240
- 8. 18/236630/416514
- 9. 18/236590/416508
- 10. 18/236340/4165550
- 11. 18/236270/4165930