

**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.

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1. Name of Property

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historic name Bon Air
other names/site number Adam and Susan Bear House; Bear Lithia; VDHR File No.: 082-5157

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2. Location

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street & number 2477 Bear Lithia Road (SR 607) not for publication N/A
city or town Elkton vicinity X
state Virginia code VA county Rockingham code 165 zip code 22827

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3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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.)

Signature of certifying official Virginia Department of Historic Resources Date _____
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title 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 Signature of the Keeper _____
____ See continuation sheet.
____ determined not eligible for the National Register
____ removed from the National Register Date of Action _____
____ other (explain): _____

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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
<u> 2 </u>	<u> 0 </u> buildings
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> sites
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> structures
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> objects
<u> 2 </u>	<u> 0 </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

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6. Function or Use

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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u> DOMESTIC </u>	Sub: <u> single dwelling </u>
<u> DOMESTIC </u>	<u> secondary structure </u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u> DOMESTIC </u>	Sub: <u> single dwelling </u>
<u> DOMESTIC </u>	<u> secondary structure </u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

 ITALIANATE
 GREEK REVIVAL

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE
roof METAL
walls BRICK
other WOOD; GLASS; CONCRETE

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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8. Statement of Significance

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Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

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)

ARCHITECTURE
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance circa 1870 - circa 1930

Significant Dates circa 1870

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: Virginia Department of Historic Resources

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approx. 0.75 acres

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

Zone Easting Northing	Zone Easting Northing	Zone Easting Northing	Zone Easting Northing
<u>1 17 707780 4256648</u>	<u>2 _____</u>	<u>3 _____</u>	<u>4 _____</u>

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.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title J. Daniel Pezzoni
 organization Landmark Preservation Associates date December 8, 2006
 street & number 6 Houston Street telephone (540) 464-5315 www.landmarkpreserve.com
 city or town Lexington state VA zip code 24450

Additional Documentation

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)

Property Owner

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

name Derek A. and Pauline H. Tidman
 street & number 6801 Benjamin Street telephone (703) 790-0860
 city or town McLean state VA zip code 22101

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.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 36 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 National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 1

Bon Air
Rockingham County, Virginia

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Summary

Bon Air is located at 2477 Bear Lithia Road (State Route 607) near Elkton, Rockingham County, Virginia. The two-story brick house was built circa 1870 for Adam C. Bear and his wife Susan M. Bear. The east-facing Italianate and Greek Revival house has a metal-sheathed, hip-and-deck roof, a rear two-story ell, front and back porches, and two one-story bay windows on the front. The two-room-deep center-passage-plan interior features Greek Revival-derived mantels, cornices, and a stair with turned balusters and newel post. Nearby stands a two-level meat house/storage building that is probably contemporaneous with the house. Bon Air is adjacent to Bear Lithia Spring, a boldly flowing spring commercially exploited in the late nineteenth century. The spring has since been covered by concrete and is used as a water supply for the Town of Elkton, and is therefore not included in this nomination.

Inventory

1. Bon Air. Circa 1870. Contributing building.
2. Meat house. Late 19th century. Contributing building.

Detailed Description: Exterior

Bon Air is constructed of randomly coursed American-bond brick with from between seven to eleven courses of stretchers between header courses. The bricks are painted white except for a small section under a rear bulkhead; the unpainted brick shows no evidence of penciling. The foundation is not readily visible but may be a combination of brick and stone since river cobbles have been observed as a foundation for one chimney. The two main section chimneys, which are brick with simple corbelled caps, rise up the walls between the rooms, whereas a third brick chimney rises on the interior end of the rear ell. The walls rise to a wood frieze with a heavily molded cornice and heavy sawn brackets at the corners. Over the one-over-one windows of the main section are cornices with multiple small brackets. The ell, which is slightly lower than the main section, has six-over-six windows without cornices. The one-over-one sashes of the main section appear to be turn of the twentieth century replacements of original sashes that may have been six-over-six. Most windows have louvered wood shutters, some with Acme shutter hinges. Several ell windows have vinyl shutters. The metal roofing on the house dates to 1999 and replaces earlier metal roofing.

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Bon Air
Rockingham County, Virginia

Description (continued)

The four-panel front door at the center of the three-bay facade has a surround with three-pane sidelights and a two-pane transom. The entry is sheltered by a one-story one-bay porch supported by delicate posts and pilasters consisting of grouped square-section uprights. Solid sawn brackets support the spans at the top and paired sawn brackets of more conventional Italianate form project above the posts in the frieze. The porch has a low-pitched shed roof, exposed rafters, and simple side railings. To each side of the porch is a one-story angled bay window with molded and bracketed cornices and paneled aprons. To the rear, in the angle of the main section and the offset ell, is an enclosed two-tier porch. The first tier has a modern enclosure of vinyl siding and storm windows. The second-tier enclosure, which is thought to date to the 1940s, was made to keep the house warmer. It has original two-pane windows, vinyl siding, and exposed framing on the inside. A stair rises inside the porch, a modern stair rises to the entrance at the west end, and under the porch is a lattice underpinning. The gabled bulkhead at the end of the ell appears to be twentieth century in date. Inside it are wood pegs, wire nails, and a wrought iron spike for hanging items. The bulkhead shelters a batten basement door painted red.

Detailed Description: Interior

The front entry opens into a center passage that contains a single-run stair with a stout turned newel post at its base, turned balusters, and a molded handrail. The newel and balusters are stained a dark walnut color, whereas the handrail appears to be polished walnut. The space under the higher end of the stair was enclosed to create a water closet in the mid-twentieth century. Inside the water closet, the two-panel door of the original closet is visible under the stair. Wood floors are typical throughout the house, although the center passage is carpeted. Walls and ceilings are plaster (on brick or lath), baseboards are typically molded, and door and window surrounds are molded in one of two profiles. Doors are typically four-panel with porcelain knobs and B.L.W. rim locks. The two doorways between the dining room and kitchen have two-panel doors with canted moldings in the surrounds.

The two rooms at the front of the house, which probably functioned as parlors originally, feature the bay windows and narrow cove cornices that appear to be composites of plaster and wood. The two rooms also have the most decorative mantels in the house. The mantel in the southeast room has fluted pilasters and an arched frieze profile. The mantel in the northeast room has tapered and chamfered pilasters. Both mantels have shelves with curved corners, and the shelf of the northeast room mantel also has a quarter-round nosing. The two mantels and others in the house have concrete hearths and cast-iron fireplace linings that may be of local manufacture. Of the two rooms behind the front rooms, the southwest room was used as a bedroom before it was converted to a sitting room in the mid-twentieth century, and the northwest room was and is a dining room. The two rooms and the kitchen in the ell have simple post-and-lintel mantels with relatively narrow pilasters and a fillet molding that crosses the frieze. Next to the fireplace in the southwest room is a closet with a six-panel door and traces of early off white or putty-colored paint on the door trim. Next to the dining room fireplace is a built-in china cabinet with paneled doors and small wood pulls. The kitchen, which now occupies the entire first floor of the ell, was

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Bon Air
Rockingham County, Virginia

Description (continued)

formerly subdivided into a kitchen and a narrow pantry extending along the dining room wall. The pantry was removed and the kitchen remodeled in the 1940s by a summer boarder, Karl Glassburner, known to the family as "Dutch". He added base cabinets with Art Deco fluting and chamfered door panels. The sink base was added under a sink that may have been installed in 1935 or 1936 when the property received electricity. The floor has cream and gray linoleum tiles with marbled black divider strips.

The second floor repeats the two-room-deep center passage plan of the first floor. A change in finish from the first floor is a paper tile ceiling in the center passage. The upstairs rooms were heated with radiant heat from the chimneys that came through ornate metal grilles in the wall. Over the grilles were bracketed mantelshelves mounted on the wall. In 1935 or 1936 a bathroom was created out of the northwest upstairs room. The bathroom is entered through a door with five vertical panels and has a black and off white linoleum tile floor. A high one-over-one window was cut through the exterior wall to light the bathroom. The two small second-floor ell rooms are entered from the back porch through two-panel doors. The inner storage room has simple filet or canted molding door and window surrounds and a nail rail studded with cut nail hooks for hanging items. The outer room, which was occupied by a hired hand (Raleigh Cambell) in the early twentieth century, derived radiant heat from the chimney shaft which protruded into the room. The attic was not accessed. The partially excavated basement has concrete and dirt floors, parged walls, and cut-nailed root bin. The circular-sawn floor joists of the first floor are visible.

Detailed Description: Outbuildings and Landscape Features

One other resource stands on the nominated parcel: a two-story meat house/storage building that is nineteenth century in date and presumably contemporaneous with the house. The white-painted frame outbuilding has a metal-sheathed gable roof and cut-nailed weatherboard siding and was reported in a 2001 reconnaissance survey to have a random rubble stone foundation. On the first-story side elevations are latticed window openings and in the south-facing second-story gable is a six-pane window. At the front (north) end is a recessed entry porch with a concrete floor and a small store room. A beaded batten door with a wooden lock box opens into the single room of the first story. The room functioned as a meat house, as indicated by the rows of wooden hooks that project from the ceiling joists. The room has exposed framing, a wood floor, shelving along the walls, a work table, and an interior batten shutter on the west window opening. A crude stair ascends to the second floor, which apparently functioned for some sort of storage, perhaps for cured meat or other food stuffs. Evidence of this use is suggested by sheet metal linings around the bottom ends of rafters and below the lowest rungs of a scaffold that fills the space. The linings served as rodent-proofing, presumably to protect food. A second, smaller room occupies the space over the entry porch. The building's structure is most apparent on the second floor. The corner posts and plates are mortise-and-tenoned and pegged together and the studs are mortised into the plates but not secured by nails or pegs. The rafters are butted at the ridge. Framing members are

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Bon Air
Rockingham County, Virginia

Description (continued)

circular-sawn.

The yard is enclosed on the east and north sides by a low white-painted rail fence. The elms that shade the front yard were planted by Mary Frances Keiser, who owned the farm from 1909 until the early 1950s. A 1936 Works Progress Administration photograph of Bear Lithia Spring showing most of Bon Air's front yard indicates that the elms had not been planted by that time.

Bon Air is adjacent to Bear Lithia Spring, covered by concrete in the 1960s and used as a water supply for the Town of Elkton. The spring no longer has integrity and is not included in this nomination.

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Section 8 Page 5

Bon Air
Rockingham County, Virginia

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Statement of Significance

Bon Air, located in Rockingham County, Virginia, is an Italianate and Greek Revival house built circa 1870 for Adam and Susan Bear. The house stands next to Bear Lithia Springs, a boldly flowing water source acquired by the Bear family during the colonial period and commercially exploited in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Adam and Susan Bear apparently hosted guests who imbibed the curative spring water, a practice continued after 1909 by the next owners of the property, John and Mary Frances Keiser. The Bears also leased the spring to parties who shipped out its water by way of a specially constructed rail spur. Bon Air's architectural features include mantels in a variety of derivative Greek Revival forms and front parlors with bay windows and plaster cornices. The house remains in the ownership of a descendant of the Keiser family, but the spring is owned by the Town and has since lost integrity.

Bon Air is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C in the area of architecture as a well preserved representative of the Greek Revival and Italianate styles. The property is also eligible under Criterion A in the area of social history for its association with the tradition of springs-going, an important social phenomenon in Virginia and the region. The period of significance begins with the construction of the house circa 1870 and extends through circa 1930, embracing intensive use of the property as a lodging house with access to the spring by the Bear and Keiser families. Bon Air is eligible at the local level of significance.

Acknowledgements

A number of individuals assisted the preparation and review of this nomination, foremost among them the owners of the property and sponsors of the nomination, Derek A. and Pauline Harrell Tidman. Assistance was also provided by Cheryl Metz, Dr. James A. Ramage, and Joanna Evans, David Edwards, Lauren Merial, Jean McRae, and Marc Wagner of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

Historical Background

Bon Air was built to be close to Bear Lithia Spring, a natural feature that figured in the earliest chapters of the European settlement of Rockingham County. Shenandoah Valley historian John W. Wayland records that in 1741 the spring was acquired along with 820 acres by the German-born Adam Miller (circa 1700-circa 1780), whom Wayland regarded as apparently "the first settler of Rockingham and adjacent sections of the Valley." In 1764 Miller sold the spring and 280 acres to his son-in-law Jacob Bear (1724-1780 or 1783). The spring and surrounding acreage descended in the Bear family.¹

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Bon Air
Rockingham County, Virginia

Statement of Significance (continued)

By the late 1860s the spring had come into the possession of Jacob Bear's grandson Adam Clark Bear (1820-1906), who owned it as part of a tract of just over 289 acres. Incomplete county land tax records provide confusing evidence for when Bear may have had his house next to the spring constructed, but they indicate a name change that is telling. In 1870 Bear's tract is described by the locational term "Shenandoah River." In 1873, after an apparent two-year gap in the records, the tract is referred to as "Bonn [sic] Air," a name that suggests a dwelling and one that hints at the property's association with springs-going, described below. The tract was described as "Bon Air" or "Bon Air Springs" until the 1890s when the name changed to "Bear Lithia Springs." The value of buildings on the tract experienced ups and downs that complicate interpretation. Between 1870 and 1873 the value of buildings increased from \$950 to \$4,000 before dropping to \$1,000 later in the decade. Bon Air's architectural features provide a line of evidence that points to a date of construction during the early post-bellum period, as presented below in the architectural discussion.²

Adam C. Bear married Susan M. Long (1823-98) in 1844 and the couple raised a large family. Bear is described as a farmer in federal censuses. He was also a slave owner, owning ten slaves in 1850, and he prospered during the antebellum period. In 1850 his real estate was valued at \$5,500 and in 1860 it was valued at \$21,000. After the war Bear branched into the milling business. In June 1868 the *Rockingham Register* reported, "Adam Bare has built a large merchant and saw-mills," and in 1871 Andrew Boyd's *Virginia State Business Directory* listed Bear as the owner of a gristmill. The 1885 Lathrop and Griffing atlas shows a gristmill a short distance west of Bon Air on the Shenandoah River and as late as 1909 Bear Lithia Road was referred to as the "mill road" on deeds. Bear owned another mill: a portable steam sawmill with a Russell engine purchased in 1883. Despite all the evidence of milling activity, the federal census industrial schedules of 1870 and 1880 apparently do not record Bear's mill. The population schedules for 1880 do, however, list a miller named James Carrol as a resident of the vicinity (his dwelling is enumerated two dwellings after Bear's). It is possible Bear's mill sustained damage in the great flood that struck western Virginia in September 1870. Although a specific account of damage to his mill has not been located (issues of the *Rockingham Register* for the weeks immediately after the flood are missing), mills and other property along the Shenandoah River were extensively damaged or swept away.³

Bear derived economic benefit from Bear Lithia Spring by offering lodging to individuals who "took the waters" and by arranging with various concerns to bottle and market the water. Virginia's tradition of springs-going extends back to the eighteenth century—George Washington frequented Berkeley Springs, now in West Virginia—and by the mid-nineteenth century the tradition had spawned a host of palatial springs resorts in the western mountains. Rockingham County boasted Rawley Springs and Massanetta (Taylor) Springs, both thriving resorts in their day. Adam C. Bear and a relative, Henry A. Bear, tapped into the phenomenon on a more modest scale. According to Elkton historian R. B. Hutton, Henry Bear operated a hotel a short distance from Bon Air on the Luray Turnpike (present-day Highway 340). The hotel stood at least into the early twentieth century and was recalled by Mary Frances Keiser, the great aunt of Bon Air's present owner. In 1887 Adam and Susan Bear leased Bear Lithia Spring to Harrisonburg attorney William

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Bon Air
Rockingham County, Virginia

Statement of Significance (continued)

B. Compton and an associate, John R. Jones. The lease reserved use of the water for the Bears and for “all persons sojourning with them.” Presumably the Bears envisioned a resort function for their property in the early 1870s when they named it Bon Air, “good air.” Fresh, healthful mountain air was an added inducement for visitors to western Virginia’s springs resorts.⁴

The 1887 arrangement with Compton and Jones was one of several the Bears made to market the spring water, which was sold in vessels labeled with a bear insignia. In 1899 Adam Bear granted a thirty-year license to the Bear Lithia Water Company to sell the water. The company, headed by A. G. Dickenson of New York, erected a bottling plant beside the spring and began shipping water out in 1906. According to Hutton, “A special glass lined tank car was made to ship the water to New York.” The proximity of the Norfolk and Western rail line, which was constructed through the Bon Air property in 1881, was key to the success of the operation, and in fact a spur line was built up to the spring to facilitate shipping. A 1936 Works Progress Administration report on the spring and its “pure limpid crystal water” described it as a treatment for “different diseases such as kidney and bladder trouble and dyspepsia, nervous dyspepsia, gout, rheumatism, bright disease and several other diseases” (presumably the description was cribbed from old advertising copy). Interest in the spring also spun off a development scheme. In 1891, according to Hutton, “the Bear Lithia Developing Company was formed and lots were laid off around the spring in an effort to form another township.” The timing was bad—the initiative coincided with the depression of the early 1890s—and there is no evidence that any lots were developed.⁵

The marketing efforts began during Adam and Susan Bear’s elder years and continued after their deaths. The 1880 census lists the Bear household as consisting of Adam and Susan, their daughters Mary and Gertrude, and a third daughter “Lillie” (actually Sallie) and her husband Charles Stephens and their young son James. By 1896 two other or additional grandchildren apparently resided in the household: Loving and Charles Turner, the children of Adam and Susan’s deceased daughter Gertrude. Susan Bear died in 1898 and Adam in 1906. The property went to their surviving children and the two Loving grandchildren and in 1909 it was sold to John Shields Keiser. John Keiser (d. 1918) and his wife Mary Frances Maupin Keiser (d. 1953 or 1954) cultivated and raised livestock on the “Bear Lithia Farm,” as the property was referred to in the 1909 deed.⁶

The Keiser’s grand niece Pauline H. Tidman recalls that “Aunt Frank” continued the practice of opening the house to summer boarders, the most famous of which was Confederate General John Singleton Mosby (1833-1916). The family tradition that Mosby visited the property finds support in surviving Mosby correspondence at the University of Virginia Special Collections. Mosby was a frequenter of springs resorts and, like many of his contemporaries, believed in the therapeutic properties of water. At the end of his life he suffered from a skin complaint and constipation, conditions that were treated by imbibing or bathing in mineral-rich water. In June 1913 he lodged at the Elkton Hotel in Elkton and wrote to a grandson “I am improving in health every day.” The hotel stationery on which he wrote claimed that lithia water from a spring in Elkton was “used in the Hotel for all purposes” (the letterhead also touted “Mountain views from

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Bon Air
Rockingham County, Virginia

Statement of Significance (continued)

every window.”) In 1915 Mosby wrote that he intended to go to “some country boarding place near Washington” to work on his memoirs and settled on a location in Maryland “said to be a quiet, pretty place with nice boarding houses.” Mosby’s habits and his familiarity with the Elkton area lend credence to the association with Bon Air.⁷

After John Keiser’s death in the influenza pandemic of 1918, boarding became an economic necessity for the widowed Mary Frances and her five children (Vernon Corneal, Sally Shields, Thomas Maupin, Georgie Anna, and Margaret Hannah). The family was assisted by a hired man named Raleigh Campbell who lived in a second-story room in the ell. Tidman suggests that the hotel on Highway 340 may have generated business for Keiser’s boardinghouse. “The family could have provided closer proximity to the spring, more privacy, and probably a lower charge rate,” she notes, and speculates that the same arrangement may have existed during the Bear family years. Bon Air has water rights to the spring and water is piped directly into the house. Tidman believes the number of boarders dwindled after the 1920s, although some continued to come as late as the 1950s. “The few who did come [during the later period] were people who had come before and had become personal friends,” she notes. One of the later guests was Karl “Dutch” Glassburner, a German-born veteran of the United States Army from the Washington, D.C., area. Dutch remodeled the kitchen and put in bedroom floors as a favor to Mary Frances Keiser. After Keiser’s death in the 1950s the property passed to her children and then in the 1960s to Pauline Tidman and a cousin. Pauline Tidman and her husband Derek hope that historic designation will encourage appreciation of the property by future owners. Bear Lithia Spring was covered in the 1960s by a low cylindrical concrete enclosure built by then owner Coors Brewing Company. The enclosure was constructed above a circular stone curb dating to the historic period. Today the spring, which is generally reported to have an output of about three million gallons a day, is owned by the Town of Elkton.⁸

Architectural Discussion

Bon Air has the standard two-room-deep center-passage plan and two-story brick construction of the houses of many of Virginia’s more affluent mid-nineteenth century inhabitants. Several lines of architectural evidence support the early post-bellum date suggested by documentary sources. One is the Italianate detail, possible before the war but more common among Virginia’s rural houses after. Likewise the bay windows are a feature indicative of post-bellum construction. The simple post-and-lintel form of the mantels in the back rooms and kitchen are indistinguishable from antebellum examples of the Greek Revival style, but the mantels in the two front rooms have features that are later in appearance. These are the chamfering of the pilasters in the northeast room and the arched profile of the frieze in the southeast mantel. Also, the most common rim lock in the house is a design patented by the Branford Lock Works of Branford, Connecticut, on July 21, 1863, and presumably not available in the South until after the Civil War. The presence of these rim locks, especially in contexts like the second-floor ell storage room, a room unlikely to have been upgraded since its construction, provides additional support for a post-bellum date of construction for Bon Air.⁹

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Bon Air
Rockingham County, Virginia

Statement of Significance (continued)

Bon Air possesses a number of architectural and functional features of note. Two-panel doors, a hallmark of the Greek Revival style, and six-panel doors are relegated to the more informal spaces of the house, suggesting they were regarded as outmoded by Bon Air's unknown builder. Fireplaces were omitted from the upstairs rooms; instead those rooms were heated by stove and have mantel shelves mounted on brackets, a feature that became more common later in the century. In the 1930s one of the two second-floor ell rooms was used by a hired man, a use that may have perpetuated nineteenth century practice in the household and an arrangement that separated help from the family. The meat house represents an important remnant of what was likely a cluster of outbuildings (a springhouse is known to have once stood next to it) that supported the functioning of the household.

Endnotes

1. Wayland, *History of Rockingham County*, 36-37; Wayland, *Men of Mark*, 419; Bear, "Bear Family Letter Series."
2. Rockingham County land tax records; Bear, "Bear Family Letter Series."
3. U. S. census; Downs, Downs and Ritchie, *Mills of Rockingham County* (volume 3), 364; Andrew Boyd and Company, *Virginia State Business Directory*, 356; Rockingham County Deed Book 23, p. 222, and Deed Book 86, p. 38; *Rockingham Register*, June 18, 1868, and October 13 and 27, 1870. The mill shown on the 1885 Lathrop and Griffing map is not depicted on the detailed Michie map of the county, published in 1875 but based on surveys made in the early to mid-1860s. A number of names in the 1880 industrial schedules for the Stonewall District of Rockingham County in which Bear lived are illegible.
4. Pauline H. Tidman personal communication; Cohen, *Historic Springs of the Virginias*, 73, 88; Hutton, *History of Elkton*, 28; Lathrop and Griffing, *Atlas of Rockingham County*; Rockingham County Deed Book 31, p. 86. Use of Bon Air as a springs lodging house was apparently fairly informal. Adam C. Bear is not listed as a hotel or boarding house owner in two business directories published during the period (nor is Henry A. Bear).
5. Rockingham County Deed Book 69, p. 247; Hutton, *History of Elkton*, 28; Hess, *Heartland*, 122; Wayland, *History of Rockingham County*, 399; Morris, "Bear Lithia Springs."
6. Pauline H. Tidman personal communication; U. S. census; Rockingham County Deed Book 86, p. 38, and Will Book 8, p. 108.
7. Pauline H. Tidman personal communication; John S. Mosby to Mr. Queen, ca. 1885; John S. Mosby to Spottswood Campbell, May 15, 1913, June 30, 1913, and June 23, 1915; John S. Mosby to Mosby Campbell, June 18, 1915 and April 1916.
8. Pauline H. Tidman personal communication; Hess, *Heartland*, 122; Morris, "Bear Lithia Springs."
9. James Blackstone Memorial Library website.

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Bon Air
Rockingham County, Virginia

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the nominated area are depicted on the approximately 180 feet per inch scale map that accompanies the nomination as an exhibit. The map is adapted from the Rockingham County Tax Parcel Map 115. The UTM points expressing each corner of the nominated property are also shown on the scaled map and on an attached aerial map. The zone is 17 and the coordinates are: A – 707797E, 4256662N; B – 707803E, 4256640N; C – 707794E, 4256629N; D – 707769E, 4256636N; E – 707768E, 4256657N.

Boundary Justification

The nominated area embraces the Bon Air house, associated outbuilding, and the yard surrounding these two resources being bounded on the north by Bear Lithia Road; on the east and south by ownership property lines; and on the west by a fence line that separates the back yard from an adjoining field. The boundary includes the historic house and immediate land surrounding the house pertinent to its architectural and social significance with the adjacent Bear Lithia Spring, which is no longer intact.

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Bon Air
Rockingham County, Virginia

PHOTOGRAPHS

All photographs are of:

NAME OF PROPERTY: BON AIR
LOCATION: Rockingham County, Virginia
VDHR FILE NUMBER: 082-5157
PHOTOGRAPHER: J. Daniel Pezzoni
**LOCATION OF NEGATIVES: The Virginia Department of Historic Resources,
Richmond, Virginia**

DATE: October 2006
VIEW OF: East (front) and north elevations of house. View facing southwest.
NEG. NO.: 23190:16
PHOTO 1 OF 5

DATE: October 2006
VIEW OF: North and west (rear) elevations of house. View facing southeast.
NEG. NO.: 23190:11
PHOTO 2 OF 5

DATE: October 2006
VIEW OF: Meat house. View facing south.
NEG. NO.: 23190:12
PHOTO 3 OF 5

DATE: October 2006
VIEW OF: Foot of stair in first-floor center passage.
NEG. NO.: 23190:4
PHOTO 4 OF 5

DATE: October 2006
VIEW OF: Fireplace in first-floor southeast room.
NEG. NO.: 23190:7
PHOTO 5 OF 5