

VLR-3/2/71 NRHP-5/6/71

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Virginia	
COUNTY: Wythe	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
MONUMENT NUMBER: MAY 6 1971	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Fort Chiswell Mansion

AND OR HISTORIC:
Fort Chiswell

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
S side of Rt. 11, .6 mi. E of intersection with Rt. 52 and Rt. 121.

CITY OR TOWN:
(Max Meadows vic.)

STATE: Virginia CODE: 51 COUNTY: Wythe CODE: 197

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"/> 00th	<input 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"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Mrs. John Mabe

STREET AND NUMBER:
Fort Chiswell Mansion

CITY OR TOWN:
Max Meadows

STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Wythe County Court House

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Wycheville

STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory

DATE OF SURVEY: 1958 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Washington

STATE: D. C. CODE: 11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Virginia
COUNTY: Wythe
DATE: MAY 6 1971
FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Ruins Unexposed

(Check One)

Altered Unaltered

(Check One)

Moved Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Fort Chiswell Mansion is set on a small promontory near Reed Creek between Lick Mountain and Draper Mountain. The house was located near what formerly was the old Valley Pike which was later enlarged to become U. S. Route 11. In recent years Route 11 was incorporated into Interstate Highway 81, and the further expansion of this highway facility has encroached unfavorably on the house. Despite this encroachment the house retains a pastoral setting with splendid views of the surrounding countryside and mountains.

The house itself is a two-story brick structure set on a foundation of irregular coursed limestone. The brick is laid in very even Flemish bond on the front (north) and west walls, and in American bond on all the other portions. Most of the architectural details show a blending of Roman Revival and Greek Revival forms, and are provincial in design. This blending is especially evident in the two-story diastyle portico which is composed of two provincial Greek Doric columns supporting a pediment without architrave or frieze. The tympanum of the pediment features a D window with interlacing tracery nearly identical in appearance to that which Thomas Jefferson designed for Pavilion IV at the University of Virginia. The one-story Italianate bracketed porches on the front and west walls appear to be very early additions. A distinguishing feature of the house is the step-gable ends, each of which incorporates a pair of slightly projecting end chimneys. On the attic level of each gable is a large three-part semi-circular arched window. The rear of the house has a two-story ell and a frame gallery. Attached to the house's east side at the basement level is a one-story brick kitchen which retains its large fireplace. Beyond the kitchen is a brick smokehouse.

The interior of Fort Chiswell has a central hall plan with two uneven size rooms on each side. The impressive staircase at the end of the hall ascends in an open well to the attic, and has scrolled stair ends and fascia boards. Nearly all the door and window trim throughout the house features planed Greek Revival-style architraves with turned corner blocks. The mantels are generally heavy in proportion and have Roman details.

Fort Chiswell has been little altered or added to, and is in a good state of preservation.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

3. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1839

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 type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

One of the outstanding landmarks of Southwest Virginia, Fort Chiswell Mansion was built 1839-1840 by two brothers on land they had inherited from their father. The two brothers, Stephen McGavock (1807-1880) and Joseph Cloyd McGavock (1813-1886); built their imposing house on a hill overlooking the original McGavock home on the property. The first McGavock settlement had occurred in 1771 when James McGavock (1728-1812) of Rockbridge County moved to the area and purchased the old Fort Chiswell tract which had first been developed by William Byrd III and Colonel John Chiswell as a frontier post to protect a lead mine that Chiswell had discovered in 1756. A portion of the original tract, including the frontier settlement, later passed into the hands of Alexander Sayers, and it was from Sayers' estate that McGavock purchased the property in 1771.

James McGavock prospered there and Fort Chiswell became one of the important stopping places on the great Wilderness Road to the West. Here McGavock ran an ordinary and other commercial establishments and when Montgomery County was formed in 1777 the first court met at his house. The county court was to continue until 1789 when Wythe County was formed.

The home of James McGavock later passed into the possession of his son, James McGavock, Jr., (1764-1838) who lived there until his death. This original homeplace was to continue in the possession of the McGavock family until its destruction by fire in 1901. When James McGavock, Jr., died in 1838 a portion of his property was left to two unmarried sons. It was these two sons who immediately launched the ambitious project of building the imposing Fort Chiswell Mansion across the road from the original family seat.

In 1839 the two brothers made a contract whereby "Lorain Thorn and James Johnson bind themselves to make and lay for ... Steve and Cloyd McGavock, 300,000 sand brick of best quality to build the proposed building in a handsome workman like style -- \$2.75 per thousand -- and themselves to lay same in handsome style with round joints and handsome arches turning over all outside doors and windows. Work to be completed by middle July 1840."

Apparently the house was finished on schedule and it remained in the hands of the McGavock family until it was sold in 1918. Throughout the nineteenth century it was well known as a centre of hospitality and the main house of an extensive and prosperous plantation.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Fort Chiswell," Norfolk and Western Magazine (May, 1947).
 Gray, Robert. The McGavock Family (Richmond, 1903).
 Kegley, Mary. Unpublished research report on Fort Chiswell property.
 Wilson, Goodridge. "Fort Chiswell Has Special Historical Appeal," The Roanoke Times, 27 September 1970.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	36° 56' 52"	80° 56' 30"		°	'	"
NE	36° 56' 52"	80° 55' 55"				
SE	36° 56' 33"	80° 55' 55"				
SW	36° 56' 33"	80° 56' 30"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 75 acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: J. R. Fishburne, Assistant Director; Calder C. Loth, Architectural Historian
 ORGANIZATION: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission DATE: February 18, 1971
 STREET AND NUMBER: Room 1116, Ninth Street Office Building
 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 _____
 Dr. Edward P. Alexander, Chairman
 Title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

Date 3/2/71

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

 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST: _____

 Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE Virginia	
COUNTY Wythe	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME			
COMMON: Fort Chiswell Mansion			
AND/OR HISTORIC: Fort Chiswell			
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: S side of Rt. 11, .6 mi. E of intersection with Rt. 52 and Rt. 121.			
CITY OR TOWN: (Max Meadows vic.)			
STATE: Virginia	CODE 51	COUNTY: Wythe	CODE 197
3. MAP REFERENCE			
SOURCE: U.S.G.S. 7½', quadrangle, Max Meadows, Virginia			
SCALE: 1:24000			
DATE: 1965			
4. REQUIREMENTS			
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS			
1. Property boundaries where required.			
2. North arrow.			
3. Latitude and longitude reference.			

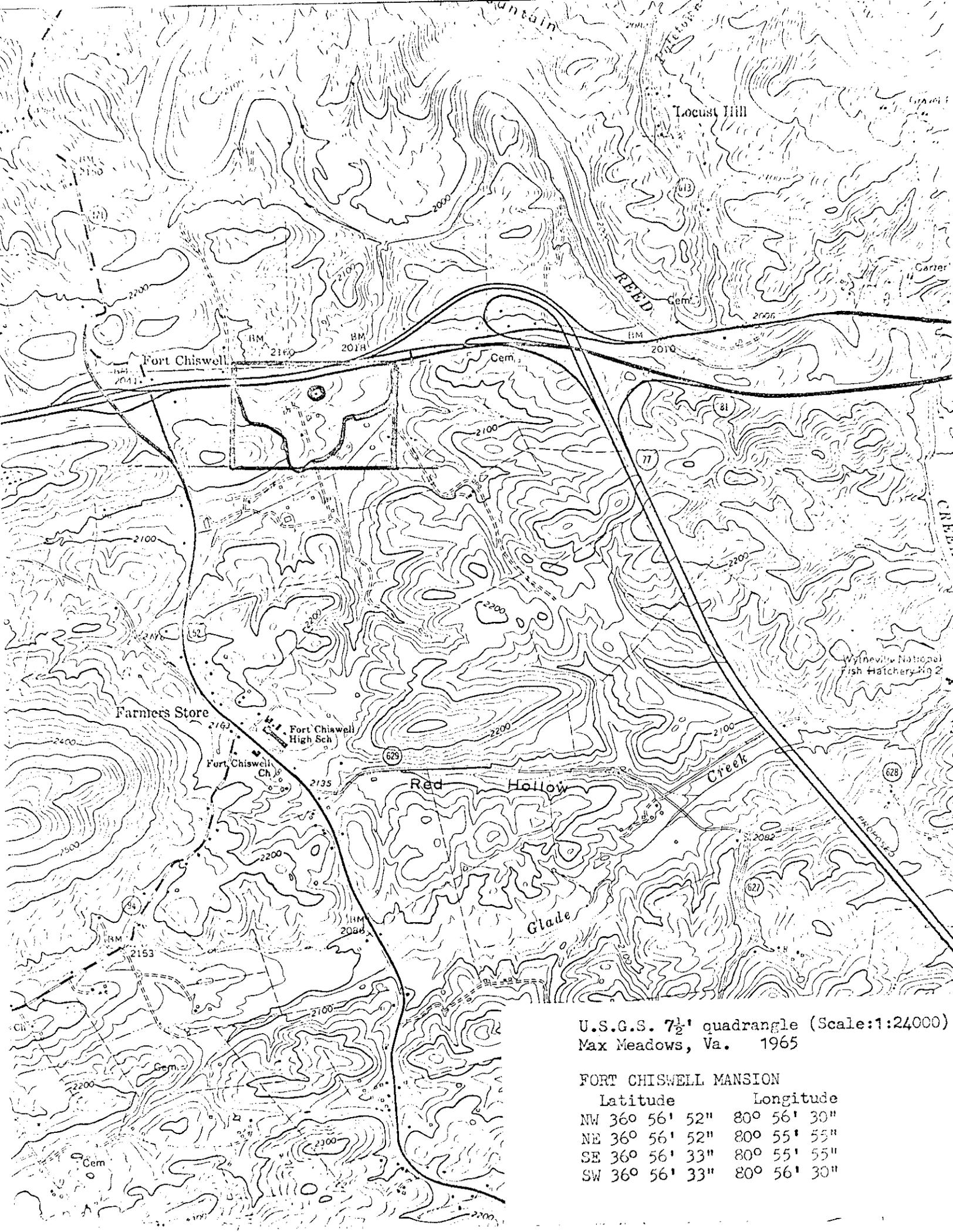
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

STATE Virginia	
COUNTY Wythe	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME			
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AND/OR HISTORIC: Fort Chiswell			
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: S side of Rt. 11, .6 mi. E of intersection with Rt. 52 and Rt. 121.			
CITY OR TOWN: (Max Meadows vic.)			
STATE: Virginia	CODE 51	COUNTY: Wythe	CODE 197
3. PHOTO REFERENCE			
PHOTO CREDIT: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission			
DATE OF PHOTO: 1970			
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Richmond, Virginia			
4. IDENTIFICATION			
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. View from northwest.			



U.S.G.S. 7 1/2' quadrangle (Scale: 1:24000)
 Max Meadows, Va. 1965

FORT CHISWELL MANSION

	Latitude	Longitude
NW	36° 56' 52"	80° 56' 30"
NE	36° 56' 52"	80° 55' 55"
SE	36° 56' 33"	80° 55' 55"
SW	36° 56' 33"	80° 56' 30"