

VLR-4/17/73 NRHP-6/18/73

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: Virginia
COUNTY: Spotsylvania
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Fall Hill

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: .2 miles North of Route 639, .7 miles West of intersection with Route 1.

CITY OR TOWN: Fredericksburg vicinity

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Seventh; J. Kenneth Robinson

STATE: Virginia CODE: 51 COUNTY: Spotsylvania CODE: 177

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<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 <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	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. Lynn W. Franklin, Sr.

STREET AND NUMBER: Fall Hill R.F.D. 1, Box 1

CITY OR TOWN: Fredericksburg

STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

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

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Spotsylvania

STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory

DATE OF SURVEY: 1957 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Washington

STATE: D. C. CODE: 77

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7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Fall Hill dwelling house is a two-story Georgian structure covered by a hipped roof from which project two square interior chimney stacks. The outside dimensions of the house are approximately 56' X 40'. The walls are laid in randomly glazed Flemish bond throughout and have no decorative features such as belt courses, water table or rubbed dressings. All four walls have been painted but the paint has been allowed to weather off, giving the walls a mellow texture. Because of an extensive remodelling undertaken around 1830, the walls, roof and chimneys are the only original exterior architectural features. All the sash, doors, window and door frames were replaced with simple mid-nineteenth century work. As part of the remodelling the window openings in the two end bays of the five-bay west front were bricked up on both stories, as were the openings on both stories of the south bay of the five-bay east front. For the rest of the windows, the sizes of the openings were not changed, and in typical Georgian fashion, the second floor openings are reduced proportionally in relation to the first floor openings. Irregularities in the brickwork above all the openings suggest that the windows originally were topped by either segmental or splayed-brick flat arches but no trace of any survives. The simple Doric porches on the west front and south end date from the nineteenth century, and a larger porch of similar style on the east front was removed in recent years. The frame service wing on the north end is a nineteenth century addition.

Fall Hill's plan consists of a central hall with two large rooms on either side. A small vestibule serving the south entrance is situated on the south side of the chimney between the southeast and southwest rooms. The space corresponding to this vestibule on the opposite side of the chimney contains the present basement stairs. The main stair is located near the east end of the hall on the north side. Family tradition has it that the original stair was located in the northwest room, now used as a dining room. The present stair is claimed to have been removed from an old house in Middlesex County, but its round handrail and plain balusters make it stylistically contemporary with the 1830's remodelling. All other original first floor woodwork was removed in the remodelling as well, and was replaced with simple Greek Revival trim featuring the typical turned corner blocks in the windows and doorways. The northwest and southwest rooms were outfitted with Greek Revival mantels, but they recently were removed to expose the original segmental fireplace openings. A black with gold vein marble mantel in Greek Revival style remains in the southeast room or library. Some original eighteenth century woodwork survives on the second floor such as simple beaded baseboard, door frames, and doors. Each of the half-dozen or so original doors have six beveled panels in the "Cross-and-Bible" pattern. What is claimed to be an original mantel survives in the southwest

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bedroom, and is the late-eighteenth century Adam style with punch-and-dentil cornice and reeded pilasters. The remaining second floor bedrooms have nineteenth century mantels. The house's attic space is accessible and in it can be seen the very impressive original framing of the hipped roof.

Throughout the house there are many family furnishings including a Chippendale Fredericksburg side chair and a signed (I. Wire) Windsor chair, both of which are original Thornton family pieces. Also there is an unusually fine collection of Chinese art objects assembled by the present owner.

The house is set in a handsome park containing many old trees in a variety of species. With its boxwood walks, gravel lanes, and ivybeds, the park exudes a feeling of great antiquity. Immediately to the west of the house is a steep terraced hillside from which one obtains a panoramic view of Fredericksburg and the Rappahannock Valley. ~~Two contemporary outbuildings, a brick kitchen (now in ruins) and a brick schoolhouse,~~ are located near the house. To the north of the house, at the foot of the hill, is the Rappahannock River and adjacent canal.

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3. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pro-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input checked="" 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)

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/Phi- | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | osophy | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Human- | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | ities | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Fall Hill is the home of the Thorntons, one of Virginia's distinguished Colonial families. The land on which this hill-top plantation was established is believed to have been included in the 8000 acres in Spotsylvania County patented by Francis Thornton I (1657-1727) around 1720. The Thornton's earliest house in the area was The Falls, a plantation located at the foot of Fall Hill, now within the present town limits of Fredericksburg. The Falls probably was erected by Francis Thornton II (1682-1751), who established a grist mill on the Rappahannock about a half-mile from The Falls house. There is a family tradition that Francis Thornton III (1711-1749) built a house at Fall Hill to escape the summer heat of their low-lying house The Falls. The fact that he lived there at least part-time is supported by the will of Ruben Thornton which refers to his brother, Francis Thornton III as being of Fall Hill. There is no evidence to indicate that a house of the mid-eighteenth century period is incorporated in the present mansion, however.

Francis Thornton III is probably the most noted member of the family. He married Frances Gregory, daughter of Mildred Washington Gregory, aunt and godmother of George Washington. He served as a burgess, a trustee of the town of Fredericksburg, and Colonel of the Spotsylvania militia. Colonel Thornton's son, Francis Thornton IV (1737-1794) inherited the Fall Hill lands from his father in 1749, but continued to make his principle residence at The Falls. Francis Thornton IV married Anne Thompson, daughter of Madame Butler-Brayne Spotswood Thompson by her second marriage to the Reverend John Thompson.

Francis Thornton V (1760-1836), son of Francis Thornton IV, is believed to have erected the present mansion at Fall Hill, probably around the time of his marriage to Sally Innes in 1790. Architectural evidence confirms such a construction date as the house is of the more refined late-Georgian style of the late-eighteenth century. Francis Thornton V served as a Justice of the Peace of Spotsylvania County and was referred to in the county records as being of Fall Hill. His son, Francis Thornton VI (1796-1881), was a Presbyterian minister and moved to Kentucky in 1845. Francis Thornton V died in 1836 without a

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will and Fall Hill was tended by family slaves until the estate was settled. Nine years later, in 1845, the estate was deeded to Doctor John Roberts Taylor, husband of Bessie Forbes, daughter of Francis Thornton V's daughter, Sally Innes Thornton Forbes of Falmouth. The extensive alteration of Fall Hill in the late 1840's was undertaken at the direction of Doctor Taylor.

Fall Hill was a strategic point during the Fredericksburg Campaign. General Lee established a breastwork at the foot of the hill to guard the river crossing. At one point Lee approached Doctor Taylor and informed him that the house was in the line of fire and could not be saved, and to remove his family and possessions. Fortunately a shift in action spared the house from damage.

In 1870 the Taylors were reunited with the Thorntons through the marriage of Doctor Taylor's son, Murray Forbes Taylor, to Butler-Brayne Thornton, a descendent of Francis Thornton V. Taylor and his bride lived with Doctor Taylor at Fall Hill from 1875 to 1877 when they moved to California where Taylor managed the estate of Mrs. Phoebe Hearst at San Simeon. Doctor Taylor died in 1885, and his son Richard sold Fall Hill out of the family. Murray Forbes Taylor retired in 1908, and Mrs. Hearst, in appreciation for his fifteen years of service acquired Fall Hill as a gift for Taylor. Mrs. Hearst was a close friend of Taylor's wife, and suggested that Fall Hill be left to her granddaughter and namesake. In accordance with Mrs. Hearst's wish Fall Hill is owned today by Butler-Brayne Thornton Robinson Franklin.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

History Summary of Fall Hill by Butler-Brayne Thornton
 Franklin (unpublished mms. in archives of Virginia
 Historic Landmarks Commission.)
 Reserach Report by Mrs. John Peters in archives of Virginia
 Historic Landmarks Commission.

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	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	38 ° 19' 19"	77 ° 29' 47"		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	38 ° 19' 19"	77 ° 29' 11"				
SE	38 ° 18' 56"	77 ° 29' 11"				
SW	38 ° 18' 56"	77 ° 29' 47"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 70 acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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: March, 1973

STREET AND NUMBER:
 Room 1116 Ninth Street State 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

Junius R. Fishburne, Jr.

Junius R. Fishburne, Jr., Director
 Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

Title

APR 17 1973

Date

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

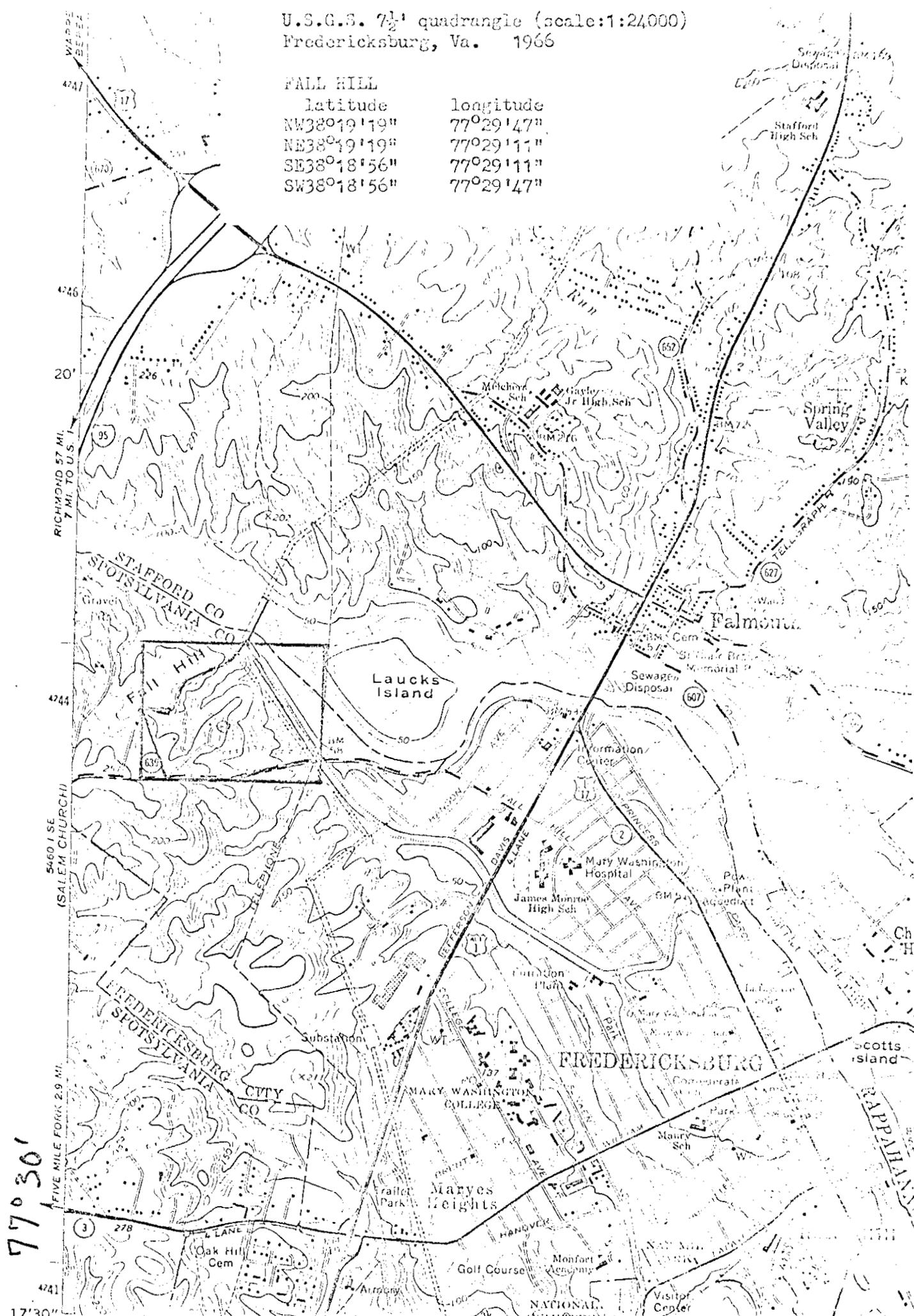
Date _____

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U.S.G.S. 7 1/2' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)
 Fredericksburg, Va. 1966

FALL HILL

latitude	longitude
NW38°19'19"	77°29'47"
NE38°19'19"	77°29'11"
SE38°18'56"	77°29'11"
SW38°18'56"	77°29'47"



WARRER BEBEL
 4741
 4746
 20'
 RICHMOND 57 MI.
 7 MI. TO U.S. 1
 4744
 5460 I SE
 (SALEM CHURCH)
 4741
 FIVE MILE FORK 2.9 MI.
 4741

77°30'

17'30"

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