

VLR-1/20/81 NRHP-10/6/81

FHR-8-300 (11-78)

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCERS use only
received
date entered

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic unknown

and/or common Conner House (preferred)

2. Location

street & number Conner Drive not for publication

city, town Manassas Park X vicinity of congressional district 8th (Herbert E. Harris, I)

state Virginia code 51 county Prince William code 153

3. Classification

Category Ownership Status Present Use
X building( ) private X unoccupied
structure both work in progress
site Public Acquisition Accessible
object in process X yes: restricted
being considered yes: unrestricted
no other: not in use

4. Owner of Property

name City of Manassas Park

street & number City Hall, 103 Manassas Drive

city, town Manassas Park vicinity of state Virginia 22110

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Prince William County Courthouse

street & number 9250 Lee Avenue

city, town Manassas state Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes X no

date 1979 federal X state county local

depository for survey records Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 221 Governor Street

city, town Richmond state Virginia 23219

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## 7. Description

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**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Conner House is a two-story, gable-roof, stone residence constructed in two parts. The main section, built ca. 1800-1820, has a more steeply pitched roof than the later wing, which was constructed in 1855. The stone is locally quarried red sandstone, or "brownstone," probably dug from one of two known quarries in the vicinity.

The 18"-20"-thick walls of the older, main section are constructed of large, roughly shaped blocks laid in approximate courses, while the smaller stones on the later addition are laid in less well-defined courses of rubble. Large stone lintels are present above the doors and windows. The stone is mortared with lime and sand and repointed in places with portland cement. The exterior walls previously were whitewashed. There are also traces of yellow ochre paint on the exterior beneath the whitewash. There is an exterior stone chimney on the east end of the older section and an interior stone chimney on the west end of the later section. Both of these chimneys have been repaired with brick.

A two-story, early 20th-century frame addition, formerly located on the rear or north side of the house's main section, contained a kitchen on the first floor; the addition was removed by the previous owner because of its poor condition. A one-story, open porch once stood on the front of the house and spanned part of both sections.

Beneath the recently repaired, metal-covered gable roof there is a molded cornice on the earlier section and a box cornice on the later addition. Simple box trim is employed around the previously shuttered 2/2 sliding-sash windows and around the doors. The windows, though most of the panes now are broken, were probably late 19th- or early 20th-century replacements of earlier 6/6 sash.

The main section, which measures approximately 27'5" x 20', has a side-hall plan, with an entry hall containing an open-string, single-flight stair opposite the front entrance and a single, large room to the right of the hall. The addition of the two-story wing converted the house's plan to a central-hall plan, with a single room on either side of the center hall.

The house's interior has been ruined through deterioration and vandalism. It is apparent, however, that the interior has been changed greatly. There are no remaining mantels, although fireplace openings are present in the two rooms on the first floor. The open-string, single-flight stair probably was installed in the late 19th or early 20th century. The newel, balusters, and most of the rail are missing. The door and window trim is predominantly plain box trim with butt joints, probably dating to the late 19th or early 20th century. There is some earlier, beaded architrave trim around the doors and deeply set windows on the second floor of the older section. Though much of the flooring throughout is medium-width, tongue-and-groove (replacement) pine, some of the early wide pine floors are present still, particularly on the second floor. It appears that "new" partitions were added on the second floor, probably in the early 20th century, thus creating four rooms from the two upper rooms that had existed since 1855. A much earlier second-floor room division, however, is suggested by signs of other partitions. Before the addition of the present stair, the hall on the second floor possibly was a wider room and featured a stair to the attic which has been removed since. The roof of the older section has been rebuilt, evidenced by the presence of hewn rafters which have been reinforced with sawn timbers. The attic of the older section shows signs of having been finished with lath and plaster. The sawn-off ends of several heavy hewn joists can be seen resting on the plate of the house's older section.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** ca. 1810; 1855      **Builder/Architect** unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

#### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Conner House served from July to November 1861 as the headquarters of General Joseph E. Johnston, commander of the Confederate Army during the first several months of its existence. The house also was used as a hospital for the wounded of the First and Second Battles of Manassas (Bull Run). One of the few remaining antebellum residences in the growing Manassas region, the red fieldstone structure was built ca. 1810, probably as an overseer's house, and survives as an example of a dwelling type indigenous to the area. During the first half of the 20th century the property was owned by the Conner family, proprietors of one of Prince William County's major dairy farms. In an area rapidly losing its historical ambiance through intense suburban development, the Conner House stands as an important reminder of the deep roots of the Manassas area.

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Conner House stands on land owned in the 18th century by the Hooe family, one of the first families to settle in Prince William County. The Hooes owned the extensive tract of land southwest of the house known as Mayfield, upon which Manassas Junction, the first railroad depot in the Manassas area, was built in 1851. The house probably was built by slave labor and originally had a side-hall plan with an exterior end chimney and steeply pitched, heavy-timber roof. The structure reached its present proportions ca. 1855 with the addition of the two-story stone wing with an interior end chimney and one room per floor. The alteration was a typical one and demonstrates how many houses in Virginia were enlarged in the 19th century to meet the demands for greater space.

The Civil War significance of the house was not fully known until Van Loan Naisawald, a local historian formerly employed by the National Park Service, consulted the papers of George C. Round, an early citizen and civic figure of Manassas. These contained a reference to the stone house, east of the city, that had, along with Liberia,<sup>1</sup> survived the war and was standing in 1865. In reviewing Johnston's correspondence for details of activities in the Manassas area during the period July 1861 - March 1862, it emerged that Johnston frequently was dating his papers "The Duncan House - Manassas." Naisawald went back to the census data for Tudor Hall, as the area was called in the 1860 census. The census data corroborated the evidence that Duncan's House was indeed the Conner House.

With a commanding position overlooking the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, (now the Southern Railway), in operation from Alexandria to Manassas Junction since 1851, the property served as the site of Confederate encampments throughout the war. A Timothy O'Sullivan photograph, dated 1862 and labeled "the Yellow Hospital," recently was identified as a photograph of the Conner House. Many Civil War artifacts have been found in the yard and in the

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Conner, E. R., III. "Bloom's and Bloom's Grove: A Tale of Two Farms," Echoes of History, October 1975.  
 Ratcliffe, R. Jackson. This Was Prince William, 1979.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approximately 1 acre

Quadrangle name Manassas, Virginia

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 

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2	8	7	5	2	0
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4	2	9	3	3	8	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

B 

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 Zone Easting Northing

C 

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** Beginning at a point 800' NW of Southern Railway tracks, 3200' E of State Route 28, SE of Manassas Park; thence extending 200' SSW; thence extending 200' WNW, thence extending 200' NNE; thence extending 200' ESE to point of origin.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

**11. Form Prepared By** (1) Frances Jones, Architectural Historian, Northern Virginia Planning District Commission, and

name/title(2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

organization Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission date January 1981

street & number 221 Governor Street telephone (804) 786-3144

city or town Richmond state Virginia 23219

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Tucker Hill, Executive Director  
 title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

date APR 21 1981

For HCRS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Conner House, Prince William County, Virginia

Continuation sheet #1

Item number 7,8

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7. DESCRIPTION

The building is in deteriorating condition. The house, which was purchased by the City of Manassas Park in 1973, probably had gone unoccupied for about five years prior to the sale. Vandals have broken windows and wrecked the interior. In 1976 a chain link fence was erected by Manassas Park to prevent further vandalism. At about the same time the deteriorated two-story frame wing on the rear of the house was demolished. There is a large crack on the south wall, where the two sections were joined. In 1978 the roof was repaired, thus preventing further water damage to the interior. Some of the windows have been sealed to avoid more weather damage. According to a local contractor's estimate in 1976, the stone shell of the building could be repaired, though some of the stones would have to be replaced or reinforced, while some of the timbers on the inside could be preserved.

The house is located in western Prince William County, north of Manassas and east of the City of Manassas Park, which owns the structure. The house, now unoccupied, rests on a slight hill overlooking the tracks of the Southern Railway, which pass by the front, or south side, of the house. About a mile to the east the wooded bluffs rise above Bull Run. Northeast of the house is the modern, low-rise, county-owned New Dominion School. To the west and northwest is Osbourn Park High School; and at the foot of the hill on which the house sits is Manassas Park's Social Services Department housed in a corrugated metal, one-story, gable-roof structure. Beside this building and fronting on the railroad tracks is an industrially zoned parcel.

The hill on which the house sits has been reshaped, in part to accommodate New Dominion School. The 70-foot drop to the railroad, once gradual, has been made steeper in front of the house, probably to provide fill for road and other construction at the foot of the hill.

There are no outbuildings standing on the property. Formerly, there was a log kitchen behind the house. In addition, there was a large dairy barn and several other farm buildings on the site of the New Dominion School. The house is the only remaining building of the original 100-acre farm. The house has been identified in an 1862 photograph taken by Timothy O'Sullivan and labeled "The Yellow Hospital." In this photograph, a one-story frame addition appears on the house's north end, and among the other visible outbuildings, there is a one-story log structure west of the house and a small, frame, weatherboarded structure off the southwest corner of the house. Frances Jones.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION: The bounds have been drawn to include the house and approximately one acre containing the probable sites of the outbuildings which once surrounded the main structure.

8. SIGNIFICANCE  
adjoining fields. The house allegedly was struck by a cannon shell in an artillery duel in 1861.

Joseph E. Johnston was the senior Confederate field general when he arrived in Manassas on July 20, 1861, with a small army from Winchester. His forces combined with those of General Beauregard, already at Manassas, to defeat Federal troops under General McDowell in the First Battle of Manassas on July 21, 1861. Following the battle both Johnston and Beauregard remained in the Manassas area in a strange command relationship. Johnston was

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
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Conner House, Prince William County, Virginia

Continuation sheet #2

Item number 8

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8. SIGNIFICANCE

termed the commander of the Confederate Army of the Potomac and commander of the Second Corps of that army (his own troops from Winchester). Beauregard called himself the commander of the First Corps, Army of the Potomac, though no orders from Richmond ever confirmed their relationship. Both generals stayed in the Manassas area until the early winter of 1861-62.

Following the Civil War until the end of the 19th century, the property was held by the Butlers, Greenes, Rickards, Bennetts, and Rouses. Throughout this period it also may have been attached to Bloom's Grove, a commercial stone quarry that operated in Manassas from the Reconstruction era to the early 20th century.

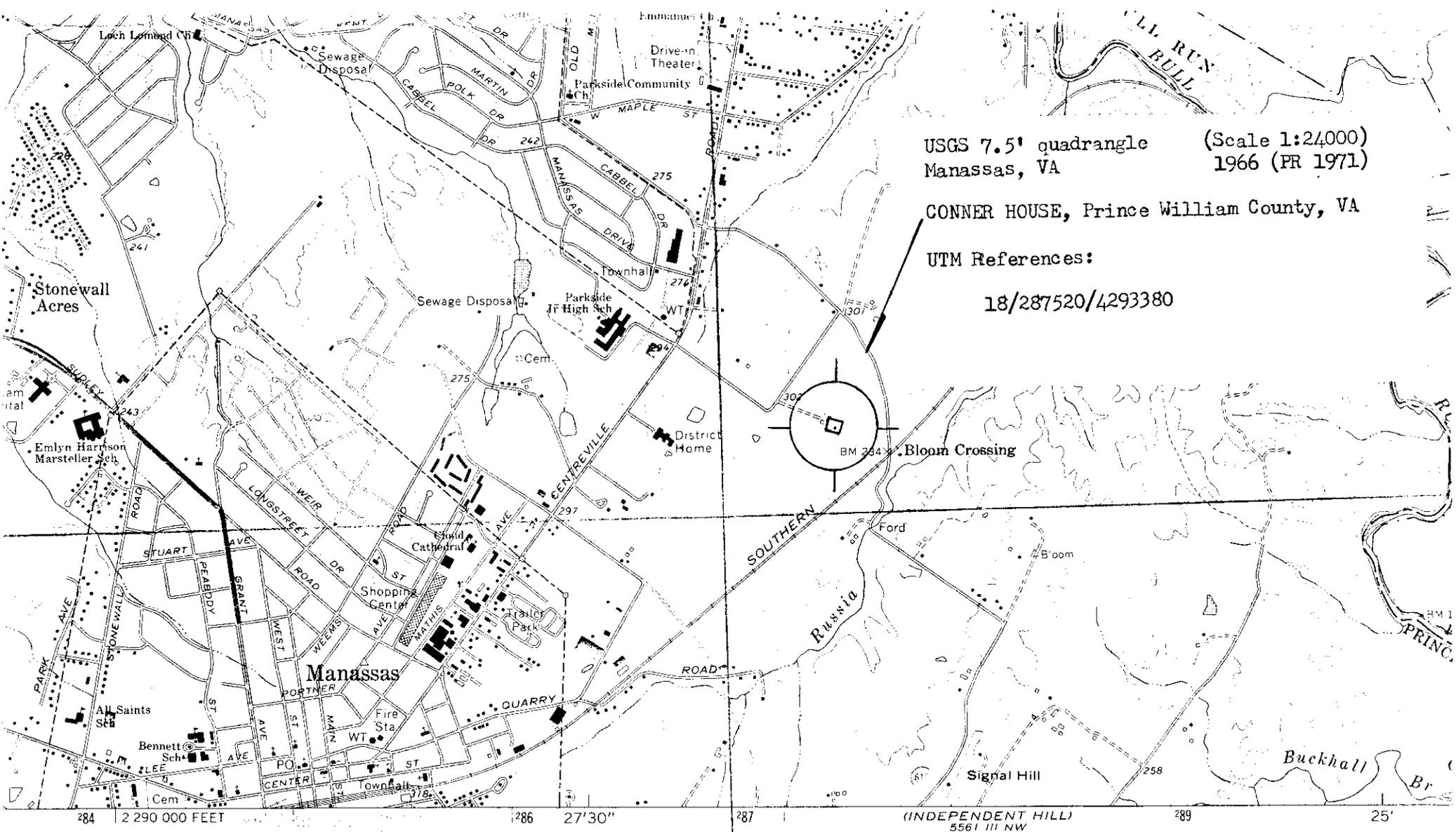
The name Conner refers to the family who owned the property from 1914-1973. Under the ownership of E. R. Conner, the property became the center of a 400-acre dairy farm, one of the largest in Prince William County. Milk was shipped to Washington, D. C., from Bloom's Crossing, a railroad stop Conner erected at the foot of the hill near his house.

After 1971 the Conner farm was divided, with the larger portion being sold to the Prince William School Board, and all of the farm buildings except the house were demolished, including an old log kitchen which sat behind the house. In 1973 the Town (now City) of Manassas Park purchased the house and yard. Located just outside the Manassas Park city limits, the house recently was saved from demolition by the Manassas Park Woman's Club who, with other interested citizens, are presently restoring the house. The city has encouraged the preservation effort by declaring the house an important historic structure within the community and by appropriating funds for repairs to the property.

Frances Jones

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<sup>1</sup>Liberia, built ca. 1825 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980, is located in the City of Manassas, about one mile west of the Conner House.

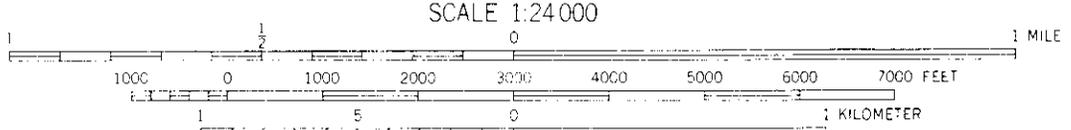
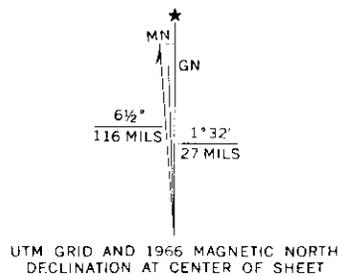


USGS 7.5' quadrangle (Scale 1:24000)  
 Manassas, VA 1966 (PR 1971)

CONNER HOUSE, Prince William County, VA

UTM References:  
 18/287520/4293380

...shed by the Geological Survey  
 ...and USCE  
 ...eric methods from aerial photographs  
 1951. Revised from aerial photographs  
 1966  
 ...North American datum  
 ...ginia coordinate system, north zone  
 ...erse Mercator grid ticks,  
 ...selected fence and field lines where  
 ...topographs. This information is unchecked  
 ...ch only landmark buildings are shown  
 ...ed from aerial photographs



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
 DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
 FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242  
 AND VIRGINIA DIVISION OF MINERAL RESOURCES, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA 22903  
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST