

VLR 6/18/09

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

LISTED ON:
VLR 06/18/2009
NRHP 08/12/2009

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 Liberty Hall
other names/site number VDHR ID 009-0013

2. Location

street & number 12000 East Lynchburg Salem Turnpike not for publication
city or town Forest vicinity x
state Virginia county Bedford code 019 zip code 24551

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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.)

W. Carter Braser June 25, 2009
Signature of certifying official Date
Virginia Department of Historic Resources
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

4. National Park Service Certification

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 the Keeper _____
Date of Action _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- x private
public-local
public-State
public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- x building(s)
district
site
structure
object

Number of Resources within Property

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, and 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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Domestic Sub: Single Dwelling
secondary building

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Domestic Sub: Single Dwelling
secondary building

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Early Republic/Federal

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick
roof Metal/Steel
walls Brick
other Wood

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

8. Statement of Significance

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

- Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
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.
Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

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

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

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance circa 1815

Significant Dates circa 1815

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.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(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 5.22

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

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	
1	17	649443	4129953	2	_____	_____	3	_____	_____	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.)

=====
11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title Ellen F. Brown, Liberty Hall property owner, and Michael J. Pulice, Virginia Department of Historic Resources

date February, 2009

=====
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 Orran and Ellen Brown
street & number 2230 Monument Avenue telephone (804) 359-0009
city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23220

=====
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.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Liberty Hall
Bedford County, Virginia**

Section 7 Page 1

=====

Summary Description

A wood-frame dwelling called Solitary Hall was built in 1778 on what is today the Liberty Hall property. About 1815, the existing brick structure was built onto the front of the wooden structure, creating an L-shape form. The brick house is a Federal-style brick, two-story, single-pile dwelling with a symmetrical five-bay façade, modillion cornice, gable roof, exterior end chimneys, and one and two-story frame additions built off of the side and rear elevations. On the front is a Victorian-era porch with slender, chamfered posts and turned spindle frieze, and deck roof with jig-sawn balustrade. There is also a circa 1815 brick dependency behind the house that is a significant, *contributing* building. Since the late 1700s, the home and its immediate curtilage of five acres have been in continuous possession of the Alexander/Read/Lee/Brown family. The parcel also includes two modern, non-contributing sheds.

Detailed Description

The five-bay façade is totally symmetrical, the centerpiece being the original double-leaf front door surmounted by a gauged-brick round arch and lighted transom, with the door jambs being recessed the depth of the walls. They are hand-carved with wooden fluting, braiding and paneling on the jamb. The original iron hardware remains. Most of the nine-over-nine wood sash windows with wavy glass remain in place throughout the house. The east (end) elevation has no window or door openings; however the west elevation has nine-over-nine sash flanking the chimney. The brick walls of the building are 15 inches thick, laid up in three-course common bond instead of Flemish bond, which would have been more typical at the time. Gauged-brick jack arches are used over the windows. The brick masonry retains the vast majority of its original sand/lime mortar. The original white penciling on the mortar joints survives in many places. The front elevation soffit is decorated with robust modillion blocks and plain fascia board. The rear elevation, however, has no ornament, only plain soffit and fascia boards. Photos from the 1950s show no change in this regard. The main roof is sheathed with standing-seam metal.

Within the brick part of the house is a wide central passage with stair, flanked by two rooms on each floor. All the rooms have carved chair rails, plain wainscoting, and ornately carved Federal-style mantels. The parlor (living room) mantel is the most notable, featuring elliptical sunburst patterns, intricate cove moldings and fluted pilasters. The dining room mantel is only slightly less elaborate. All of the woodwork is painted a solid white color. Each of the wall-depth door jams in this portion of this house are paneled.

In the 1970s, the family removed a substantial portion of the wood frame part at the back of the main house and replaced it with a new frame 2-story addition. The first floor of the new addition retains the floors from the original frame section and much of the foundation. At the same time, the house was expanded by the addition of two single-story rooms (one on each side of the house).

In early 2000, the bathrooms and the kitchens in the main house and kitchen building underwent minor renovations. Some countertops, fixtures, and tiles from the 1970s renovation were replaced or repaired. In 2007, painted tin standing-seam roofs on both the main house and the kitchen were replaced with hand-joined standing seam metal roofing, with a manufacturer-installed black finish, to match the replaced roofing material both in design and appearance. In 2008, the kitchen and bathrooms were again renovated, replacing linoleum with tile and granite. There was also a major structural renovation to the 1815 portion of the house necessitated by deterioration of the floor joists. The wood floors were removed so that the joists could be replaced. The floors were then replaced with a combination of the original wood and salvaged vintage flooring.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Liberty Hall
Bedford County, Virginia**

Section 7, 8 Page 2

=====

Though oral tradition holds that the brick dependency directly behind the main house originated as Doctor Read's office, it was more likely a kitchen/wash house. It has a rectangular footprint, brick exterior end chimneys with corbelled caps, a brick foundation, and gable roof with a relatively steep pitch for interior headroom in the loft, which likely served as servant's sleeping quarters. The roof is clad with modern standing-seam metal panels and a ridge cap. The building has hand-made bricks laid up in three-course common bond like the house, suggesting both were built at about the same time, circa 1815. Inside, the ground-floor space is bifurcated into small rooms, each with its own front door and very large fireplace suitable for cooking and heating large pots of water. The building was used later as a chicken house. In the 1970s it was renovated into a dwelling and it has remained as such since. A bathroom and kitchen were added inside, but the exterior remained unchanged.

8. Statement of Significance

Summary

Liberty Hall, an imposing Federal-style brick dwelling, was erected circa 1815 for Dr. John Thomas Wyatt Read and his wife, Elizabeth Alexander Read. Their house was a central feature of the historic New London community of Bedford County, Virginia. Read was the son-in-law of one of the region's leading citizens of the day, Robert Alexander. Alexander had previously built and occupied the first house on the property in 1778, a frame structure he called Solitary Hall, before moving to Campbell County to become its first clerk of court. The property had a role in the Civil War during Union General David Hunter's Raid on Lynchburg in June, 1864. After occupying Lexington, burning the Virginia Military Institute and looting Washington College, Hunter proceeded through the Peaks of Otter to Liberty (now the City of Bedford), thence a short distance to Liberty Hall at New London where they made an encampment. Hunter torched a number of private homes including former governor John Letcher's, but spared Liberty Hall.¹ Liberty Hall is among the best examples of the Federal style of architecture in the region, possessing many of the hallmarks of the style and the distinctive characteristics of period construction practices. As such it meets National Register Criterion C in the area of Architecture, with a period of significance of 1815, the date of construction.

Architectural Analysis

Liberty Hall, a two-story, five-bay, brick house with Federal-style details, is strikingly similar to Locust Level, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1990. Like Liberty Hall, Locust Level also fronts onto U.S. Highway 460, but is 25 miles to the west (thus was bypassed by Hunter's raid). The Locust Level nomination states that it was built in the 1820s, and is "one of the finest, most-intact Federal-style houses built in Bedford County." Liberty Hall is easily on par with this description. In fact, these are two of the best preserved among the half-dozen documented five-bay, brick Federal-style houses that survive in Bedford County. There are two very close cousins, however, in nearby Lynchburg: Sandusky (NRHP 1982), built in 1808, nine miles north of Liberty Hall; and the Crowe House, built c.1817 on Jackson Street in Lynchburg's Federal Hill Historic District (NRHP 1980). All of these notable houses have a two-story linear form that is one-room deep, with a central passage through the middle. Houses of this general form have been sometimes referred to as *I-houses*. Liberty Hall's construction date, massing, decorative details, and three-course common bond brick masonry suggest it was constructed by a Lynchburg builder and are consistent with an 1815 construction date.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Liberty Hall
Bedford, Virginia**

Section 8 Page 3

=====

Archaeological Potential

Although archaeological investigations have not been conducted on the Liberty Hall property, there is great likelihood that outbuilding foundations and other subsurface features dating from the mid-late 18th century would be encountered within the nominated parcel. Much of the ground around the house and outbuilding remains relatively undisturbed, and individual artifacts are frequently discovered in the yard. Such deposits could potentially yield new information about domestic life and construction practices during the period, for example. At this time, however, adequate information to assess the property's significance under Criterion D has not been recovered.

Historical Background

The land on which Liberty Hall is now located was once a part of the extensive holdings of William Callaway, a leading figure in the early days of New London. William transferred a parcel of the property to his son John Callaway in 1767, who then sold it to a Bernard Gaines in 1778. In 1778, 300 acres of that land was acquired by Robert Alexander and his wife Nancy (Ann) Austin of Elk Island.² Robert was the son of Robert Alexander (d.1783), founder of Augusta Academy which later became known as Liberty Hall and today is known as Washington & Lee University.³ The elder Robert Alexander also served as rector and president of the school from 1749 to 1762.⁴

Robert Alexander, the younger, was a prominent citizen in early Bedford County. He was well known for having been integrally involved in founding New London Academy and donated a majority of the land used for the school (from part of the Liberty Hall land).⁵ He served in the Revolutionary War and as deputy clerk of court in Bedford County from 1772 to 1782. In 1782, when Campbell County was formed from Bedford County, Alexander was appointed the first clerk of Campbell County. He served in that position until his death in 1820. He also served as clerk of the Campbell County circuit court from 1809 to 1819.⁶

It is believed that Alexander built the wood frame structure known as Solitary Hall on the property in 1778. When he became clerk of Campbell County he moved to what is today known as Gladys, Virginia.⁷ He deeded the Solitary Hall property to his daughter Elizabeth and her husband Dr. John Thomas Wyatt Read in 1810.⁸ Because of the poor condition of Solitary Hall, Dr. Read built a new brick house in front of the old frame structure sometime around 1815. The property was renamed Liberty Hall during Dr. Read's ownership.⁹

Dr. Read, a noted physician, descended from a distinguished colonial family. He is a direct lineal descendant of George Reade and Elizabeth Martineau of Yorktown (George Washington's great, great grand parents).¹⁰ The Read family was well known for its history of military service during the colonial era. Dr. Read's father and three older brothers (John, Thomas, and Wyatt) all served in the Continental Army. The three brothers died at Valley Forge in 1777. Born after the war, Dr. Read was named for his three deceased brothers.¹¹

Several Read family members were leaders in 19th century Bedford and Lynchburg. They held positions in public office and served in the Civil War. During the conflict, Liberty Hall was owned by Dr. Read's eldest son William A. Read and his wife Mary Jane Hare, of the Lynchburg tobacco family. As Union troops under General David Hunter passed the house on their way to Lynchburg on June 15, 1864, they encamped on the surrounding property. On the morning of June 16, Mr. Read invited General Hunter and his staff in to breakfast and thereby prevented the house from being burned. Among Hunter's staff that day was future presidents Rutherford B. Hayes and William McKinley.¹² Some believed that the time Hunter spent enjoying Read's hospitality was instrumental in his defeat at Lynchburg.¹²

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Liberty Hall
Bedford, Virginia**

Section 8, 9 Page 4

Liberty Hall has remained in the Read family since its construction. The property is currently owned by Orran Lee and Ellen Brown. Orran Lee Brown is the great-great-great-great grandson of Dr. Read. The surrounding farm, owned by Orran Brown and his brother Ryland Brown, is still farmed by the family and has recently been accepted into the Century Farm Program of the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, which honors "those farms that have been in operation for at least 100 consecutive years and the generations of Virginia farm families whose diligent and dedicated efforts have maintained these farms, provided nourishment to their fellow citizens and contributed so greatly to the economy of the Commonwealth."

Endnotes

1. Hunter's Raid began with the Battle of Piedmont on June 5, 1864, then to Staunton, where government buildings and supplies were burned. The raid culminated at the Battle of Lynchburg on June 17-18, 1864. The Union forces were defeated by Confederate General Jubal Early, then in command of Robert E. Lee's 2nd Corps, detached from the lines of Cold Harbor and sent to meet the threat of Hunter. Following the battle, Confederates pursued Union forces back through Bedford, then called Liberty.
2. Work Progress Administration Virginia Historical Inventory.
3. Robert Withers, *Autobiography of an Octogenarian*, 11; Joseph Waddell, *Annals of August County, Virginia*, 123.
4. W&L Website: <http://www.wlu.edu/x18940.xml>
5. L.L. Barnes, *The Story of New London Academy*; James Siddons, *The Spirit of New London Academy*, 492; Daisy Read, *New London Today and Yesterday*, 1.
6. F. Johnston, *Memorials of Old Virginia Clerks*, 117; Ruth Hairston Early, *Campbell Chronicles and Family Sketches*, 7.
7. Daisy Read, *New London Today and Yesterday*, 67.
8. Work Progress Administration Virginia Historical Inventory.
9. Daisy Read, *New London Today and Yesterday*, 67.
10. Alice Read Rouse, *The Reades and Their Relatives*
11. Daisy Read, *New London Today and Yesterday*, 64.
12. Daisy Read, *New London Today and Yesterday*, 69-70.

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Barnes, L.L., ed. *The Story of New London Academy, 1795-1945*. Forest, VA: Board Of Managers, 1945.
- Boddie, John Bennett. *Virginia Historical Genealogies*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1965: 89-125.
- Brown, Alexander. *Cabells and Their Kin*. Richmond: Garrett and Massie, 1939: 401.
- Early, General Jubal A. *A Memoir of the Last Days of the War*. Lynchburg: Charles W. Button, 1867.
- Early, Ruth Hairston. *Campbell Chronicles and Family Sketches*. Lynchburg: Regional Publishing Co. 1978: 7-8, 85, 122, 341-345.
- Farrar, Emmie Ferguson. *Old Virginia Houses in the Piedmont*. Charlotte, N.C.: Delmar Publishing Co., 1975: 166.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Liberty Hall
Bedford, Virginia**

Section 9, 10, photo Page 5

Johnston, F. *Memorials of Old Virginia Clerks, Arranged Alphabetically By Counties, With Complete Index of Names and Dates of Service from 1634 To the Present Time*. Lynchburg: J.P. Bell Company, 1888: 117-119.

Morton, Oren Frederic. *History of Rockbridge County, Virginia*. Staunton, Va.: McClure Co., 1920.

Read, Daisy I. *New London Today and Yesterday*. Lynchburg: J.P. Bell Company, 1950: 1-27, 63-70.

Rouse, Alice Read. *The Reades and their Relatives*. Cincinnati: Johnson and Hardin Press, 1930.

Siddons, James. *The Spirit of New London Academy*. Bowie, Maryland: Heritage Books, Inc., 1994.

Waddell, Jos. A. *Annals of Augusta County, Virginia 1726-1871*. Staunton: C. Russell Caldwell, 1902: 58, 69, 122-123.

Withers, Robert Enoch. *Autobiography of an Octogenarian*. Bowie, MD, Heritage Books, 2003. (reprint)

W&L Website: <http://www.wlu.edu/x18940.xml>, accessed February 12, 2009.

Work Progress Administration, "Liberty Hall" Virginia Historical Inventory form, 1936, Library of Virginia.

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property coincides with the boundary of the legal parcel designated Tax Map Number 153 A 37 as shown on the enclosed survey map. This survey is recorded in the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court of Bedford County, Virginia, in Deed Book 367 at Page 60.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property for Liberty Hall includes the 5.22-acre parcel immediately surrounding the home and the dependency. A surrounding area of over 50 acres (which includes a family cemetery) is owned by Orran L. Brown and his brother E. Ryland Brown, but has long been a separate legal tract.

Photo list:

Subject: Liberty Hall
Photographer: Ellen Brown

Format: digital, B&W digital prints
Date: December 2008

View descriptions:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Principal (south) elevation | 6. Principal entrance, interior view |
| 2. West elevation | 7. Parlor mantel |
| 3. East elevation, facing northwest | 8. Dining room mantel |
| 4. Rear of house, facing southeast | 9. Dependency, front (south) elevation |
| 5. First floor, main stair | |

LIBERTY
HALL
BEDFORD CO.
VIRGINIA

UTMS:
17/649443/412953

