

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Brown's Ferry (Preferred), Mahone House

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Rt. 684, SE of intersection with Rt. 672.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Drakes Corner

X VICINITY OF

Fourth (Robert W. Daniel, Jr.)

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Virginia

CODE

51

COUNTY

Southampton

CODE

175

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERICAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY (2) (See Continuation Sheet #1)

NAME (1) Mr. Eley Whitfield

STREET & NUMBER
Box 370

CITY, TOWN
Franklin

VICINITY OF

STATE
Virginia 23851

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Southampton County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
Courtland

STATE
Virginia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey

DATE
1978

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 221 Governor Street

CITY, TOWN
Richmond

STATE
Virginia 23219

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Brown's Ferry is set in the open farmlands of southern Southampton County near the Nottoway River and not far from the North Carolina border. The large brick house, built ca. 1812-1817, is the most distinguished Federal house in the county and one of the few early brick houses there.

The main house is a two-story, five-bay, gable-roofed structure, deeper than it is wide. The bricks are laid in Flemish bond on the front and rear and in three-course American bond on the gable ends. Rough jack arches crown the door and window openings. The front doorway is noteworthy. Above the late 19th-century double doors, the rectangular opening is filled by a semicircular lunette surrounded by a gouged field. The windows have 9/6 sash and louvred blinds. In each of the gables is a lunette; in addition, in the south facade there is a round-headed window set between the first- and second-floor levels to light the stairway. Three interior end chimney stacks with light corbelled caps crown the deep gable roof. (A fourth has collapsed.) The roof is covered with sheet metal and trimmed with a modillion cornice at the eaves. Sockets and stains in the gable-end brickwork reveal that this cornice was originally carried across each end to form a pediment. The remains of a one-story, early 20th-century porch shelter the front and the north end, and a one-story frame kitchen built in the late 19th or early 20th century is attached to the rear by a breezeway.

The plan is an unusual one which is related to, but not exactly like, other Tidewater Virginia plans of the era. The house is divided from front to back into two large parlors (one in front of the other) on the north and two smaller rooms separated from one another by a stairwell on the south. This arrangement is sometimes found in other large houses, but the entrance is usually in one of the sides perpendicular to the long axis.

All of the interior rooms are decorated with elaborate mantels and wainscoting. In the two large rooms, the mantels are of the pilaster-with-entablature-blocks-and-tablet type. The mantel in the northwest room has slightly pulvinated reeded pilasters with a reeded architrave band, paneled entablature blocks, wall-of-Troy-fret shelf basemold and a lightly molded shelf. The recessed wainscoting is grained, as are the doors to the southwest and northeast rooms and the stairway. The baseboards are marbled. A semicircular fanlight which helped to illuminate the stairway has been closed, but the stairs retain marbling on their stringer and risers.

The large northeast room has a mantel like that in the northwest room, except that it lacks the wall-of-Troy fret and the reeded architrave band. The wainscoting here is like that in the northwest room, but no traces of graining have survived.

The mantels in the two small south rooms are also similar to each other. They are even plainer versions of the former mantels. Their pilasters are reeded, but that in the southwest is not pulvinated. Their friezes are reduced in height, as are the plain architraves and cornices. Recessed wainscoting is used in these rooms as well.

Several interesting outbuildings survive southeast of the house. Directly southeast of it is a nearly ruinous frame smokehouse. It has a gable roof, close studding, and a later lean-to addition. Farther southeast are a gable-roofed, saddle-notched, round-log crib set on stone piers and probably built in the late 19th century and a long, gable-roofed pole barn with side sheds which have now collapsed. The latter was probably built in the early 20th century.

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 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 type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1818

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Brown's Ferry is one of the largest and most important Federal houses in Southampton County. Its handsome brickwork and interior woodwork and painting are noteworthy, and its plan is unique in the area. In addition, the house is known as the birthplace of William Mahone (1826-1895), a Confederate general, railroad executive, and a major figure in the politics of post-bellum Virginia.

Brown's Ferry stands on land Fielding Mahone purchased from the heirs of William Hodges in 1825-26. The land was owned by Dr. Samuel Browne at his death in 1795. In the distribution of his property, the land in question was assigned by the court's commissioners to Browne's daughter Eliza or Elizabeth. A complicated series of transactions led to the property's being sold to William Hodges, who probably built the present house on it sometime between 1811 and his death ca. 1817. At any rate, when the land tax assessments first included buildings in 1818, a \$1,000 valuation was assigned to the structures on the property. This valuation was made explicit when buildings began to be listed separately in 1820, and the valuation changed little throughout the antebellum period.

When Mahone purchased the interests of Hodges's legatees, he already owned an adjacent farm with \$500 worth of buildings on it. While it cannot be ascertained which of these houses the family was residing in at the time of William Mahone's birth on December 1, 1826, tradition assigns the event to Brown's Ferry. It does seem most likely that the Mahones lived in the finer of their two houses.

Later Fielding Mahone acquired other holdings and after 1830 apparently moved into the adjacent town of Monroe and then to Courtland. By 1834 he had sold the Brown's Ferry house.

In the 1850's William Mahone was instrumental in founding the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad and was elected its president in 1861. During the War Mahone, a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute, served as a Confederate officer, finally achieving the rank of Major General. He was renowned for his command of Confederate forces in the battle of the Crater, during the siege of Petersburg.

After the War, the "Hero of the Crater" resumed his business career. Then in the 1870s, a controversy over the payment of the State's debts was the central issue in Virginia's politics. In response to a plan for full payment which would ruin the State, a group known as the Readjusters was formed, with Mahone as a key figure. As leader of the bipartisan Readjusters, he was appointed to the Senate in 1881 but was not re-elected by the Democratic legislature after he enrolled as a Republican. In 1889 he ran unsuccessfully for Governor. During the Readjusters' period of political power, the group under Mahone's often autocratic guidance significantly improved the public schools, which had been sacrificed to the earlier plan for full payment of State debts. They also appealed to the interests of Virginia's blacks.

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Brown's Ferry (Preferred), Mahone House, Southampton County, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET #1

ITEM NUMBER 4,7 PAGE 1

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

(2) Mrs. Margaret W. Cotton
1205 Clay Street
Franklin, Virginia 23851

7. DESCRIPTION

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The land is no longer farmed, and thus the bounds have been drawn to include only the house and its surviving farm buildings but to exclude the modern house and utility shed. (n.b.: three outbuildings are shown on the U.S.G.S. map but only two stand.)

DU

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Southampton County Deed Books 19, 20.
 Southampton County Land Tax Books, 1824-1835.
 Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Archives. Including study done by William Cole.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 7 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Sunbeam, Va.

UTM REFERENCES

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

A | 1 | 8 | | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | | 4 | 0 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING
 C | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

B | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING
 D | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at a point on E side of private drive, about 700' S of intersection of said drive with Rt. 684 and 1000' SE of intersection of Rts. 684 and 672; thence extending about 300' NE; thence extending about 500' SE; thence extending about 500' SW, then 500' NW; thence extending about 200' NE to private drive, then crossing said drive to point of origin. These boundaries encompass the main house and surviving outbuildings.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE

March 1979

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE Tucker Hill, Executive Director
 Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE MAR 20 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

SUNBEAM QUADRANGLE
VIRGINIA-NORTH CAROLINA
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

SE/4 BOYKINS 15' QUADRANGLE

5657 III NW
(FRANKLIN)

NE
AND)

316

317

2'30"

318

2 430 000 FEET (VA.)

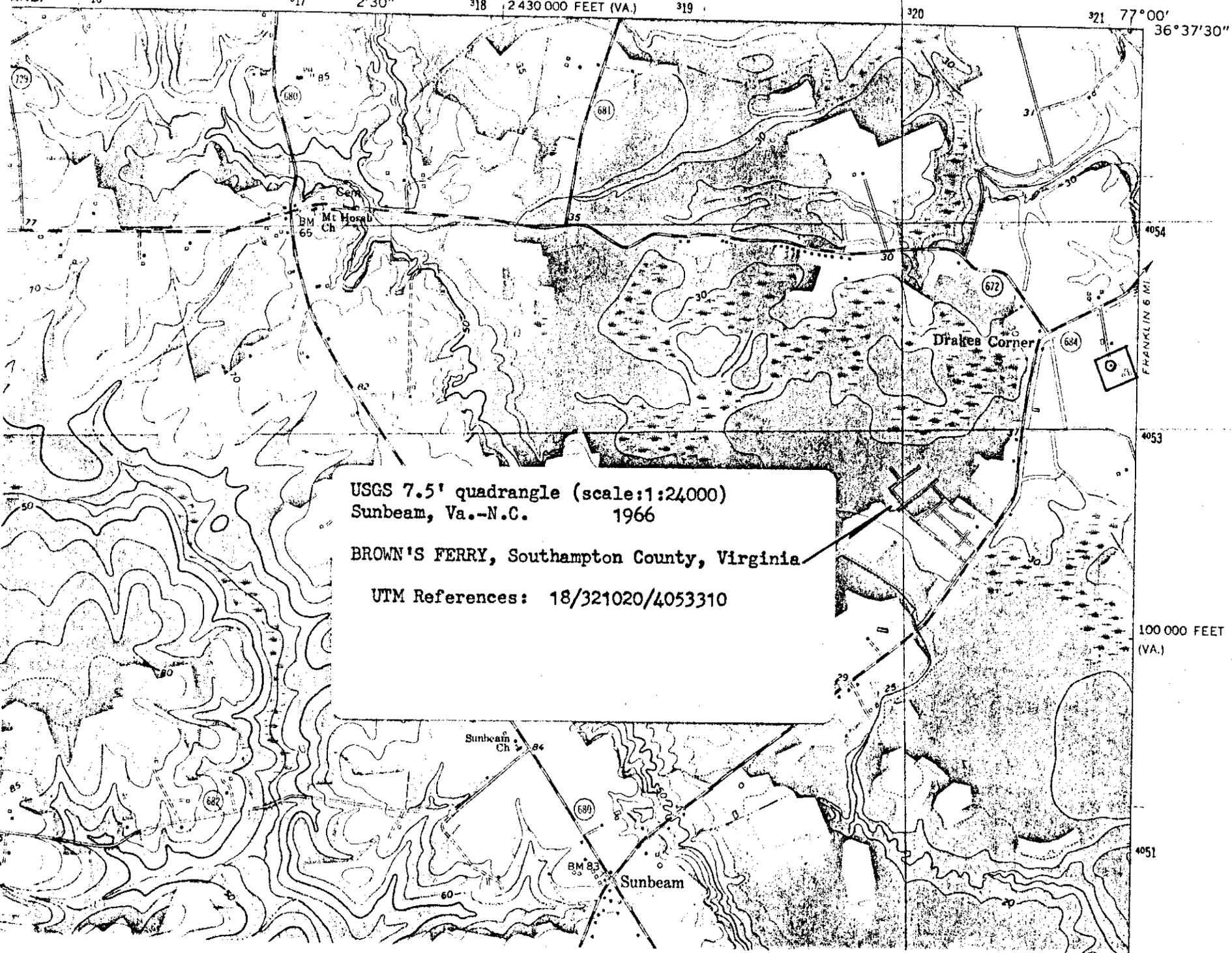
319

320

321

77°00'

36°37'30"



USGS 7.5' quadrangle (scale:1:24,000)
Sunbeam, Va.-N.C. 1966

BROWN'S FERRY, Southampton County, Virginia

UTM References: 18/321020/4053310

100 000 FEET
(VA.)