

VLR-5/18/82 NRHP-8/26/82

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Bethel Green (preferred)

and/or common James Bumgardner House

2. Location

street & number Route 701

N/A not for publication

city, town Greenville

X vicinity of

congressional district

state Virginia

code 51

county Augusta

code 015

3. Classification

Table with 4 columns: Category, Ownership, Status, Present Use. Includes options like district, building(s), structure, site, object, public, private, both, occupied, unoccupied, work in progress, accessible, agriculture, commercial, educational, entertainment, government, industrial, military, museum, park, private residence, religious, scientific, transportation, other.

4. Owner of Property

name James S. Murphy, M.D.

street & number 177 East 64th Street

city, town New York

N/A vicinity of

state New York 10021

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Augusta County Courthouse

street & number N/A

city, town Staunton

state Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys (2) (See Continuation Sheet #1

(1) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

title Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes X no

date 1973, 1980 federal X state county local

depository for survey records Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

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 <u> N/A </u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Bethel Green consists of a square, brick farmhouse with service ell completed in 1857, situated in an unspoiled pastoral setting in the southern half of Augusta County. The exterior is embellished with a one-story Greek Ionic portico with fancy scrolled lattice, rear porches with Gothic railings, and bracketed cornices. Included in the property are a number of contemporary outbuildings. The interior of the house preserves much of its original finish and furniture, including wallpaper, curtains, and carpeting.

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Bethel Green, a well-preserved, mid-19th-century farm, is located amidst rolling hills at the headwaters of Christians Creek in southwestern Augusta County. The house and outbuildings sit directly along the road, northwest of the site of the famous Bumgardner Whiskey Distillery.

The square brick house is the focal point of the farmstead. Its double-pile, central-passage plan breaks from the single-pile I-house and ell design that had become the standard local farmhouse plan in the Valley by the mid-19th century. Applied to this new design are many stylish, "popular" features--tall, paired 4/4 sash windows; a bracketed cornice; and brick chimney stacks with Gothic lancet arches. A one-story, Greek Ionic portico with a flat roof shelters an Italianate entrance. Paneled pilasters and reveals frame the double, three-panel doors, finished with heavily applied moldings. Original painted and stained glass remains in the sidelights.

Behind the central block and set slightly to the south is the original two-story, four-room service ell so common in this area in the mid- to late 19th century. The ell chimney (rebuilt) is decorated with a lancet arch similar to the main block. The ell also features a simpler bracketed cornice and smaller versions of the paired windows, in traditional 6/6 proportions, as well as 6/6 sash on the ground story. A wooden porch with an elaborate Gothic railing stretches from the east side of the ell into a double porch on the north, or back, side of the main block to a carriage porch off the east corner of the main house. This porch shelters an area serving the cellar rooms.

The interior of the house, which has received only minor alterations, presents a spectacular example of Victorian furnishing and decoration. A small, formal entrance foyer has been broken off the central passage. The entry walls and ceiling are painted olive green with pale green panels and complemented by gold molded door trim with carved corner blocks. Painted Gothic cusps and foils adorn the corners of the ceiling and the ceiling medallion. The spandrels of the entry to the staircase are painted with foliated ornament. Double rows of sidelights and a large segmental-arch fanlight, all with frosted and painted glass, frame the double doors leading towards the stair hall. A heavy walnut Victorian newel, turned balusters, and carved stair brackets created a particularly decorative stair design for this county in the central stair hall. Family records indicate that these walls had originally been finished with "Sienna marble paper," highlighted by "16 column paper," and that "Venetian carpet" covered the floor. The stair preserves its original brass carpet rods.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

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 type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention				

Specific dates 1857 **Builder/Architect** Jonathan Brown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The house built by the contractor Jonathan Brown for James Bumgardner, a prosperous Augusta County farmer and distiller, is a rare document of mid-19th-century taste in architecture and interior decoration virtually undisturbed since its completion in 1857. Although the basic house is architecturally conservative with its symmetrical, double-pile plan, the elaborate Gothic-style porches, fancy chimney stacks, scrolled lattice, and Italianate bracketed cornice make the house a stylish amalgam of contemporary architectural modes. Of exceptional interest is the Victorian interior, especially the parlors which preserve their original wallpaper, curtains, carpeting, furniture, and other embellishments. In addition to their representing Bumgardner's wealth and taste, these interior decorations are uniquely valuable to the study of Virginia decorative arts since they are completely documented as to date, source, and cost in the extensive collection of papers still in the possession of Bethel Green's owner. Adding further interest to the place is a set of early outbuildings and an unspoiled pastoral setting.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Bethel Green incorporates land which has been owned and occupied by the Bumgardner family and their descendants since the Confederation period. The present boundaries of the property include the original 102 acres on Christian's Creek purchased from John Waddell by James Bumgardner's grandfather, Christian Bumgardner, in 1784. James Bumgardner's father, Jacob, established a prosperous distillery on the property, which became known far and wide for its "Old Bumgardner Rye Whiskey." James Bumgardner acquired all his father's interest in land, slaves, and other property by covenant in 1847, although the transfer of the real estate was not recorded in the land tax book until 1855. Subsequent land tax books establish the completion of the present house by 1857. This house replaces an earlier dwelling located immediately to the southeast, the site of which is now occupied by a sunken garden.

To build his house, James Bumgardner engaged the services of Jonathan Brown, a carpenter and contractor originally from the region but who was living in Richmond when Bumgardner employed him. Brown moved back to the Greenville area while the house was being constructed. Brown's skill as a carpenter and joiner is evident on the interior by the careful moldings and other trim, and on the exterior by the elaborate Gothic railings on the rear porches. Documents pertaining to the construction of the house survive in the family papers.

Bumgardner apparently was determined to decorate and furnish his house in the latest fashion, and the excellently preserved interior survives as an important example of upper-middle-class taste of the period. The double parlors, in particular, are among a very

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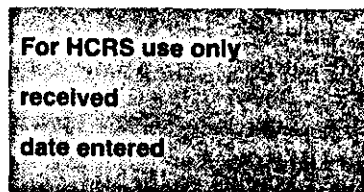
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Inventory—Nomination Form**

BETHEL GREEN, AUGUSTA COUNTY, VA

Continuation sheet #1

Item number 6, 7

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6. Representation in Existing Surveys

- (2) Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory
1957 (Federal)
Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.

7. Description - Architectural Analysis

The double parlors to the east of the passage boast the best-preserved Victorian interiors in the house. Cream-and-gold floral Rococo Revival wallpaper, possibly from France; burgundy-and-rose floral "Velvet Brussels Carpet," and gold-and-rose-colored "Satin Delaine Curtains" make a typical rich interior of the mid-19th century. The curtains still hang from their original gilt cornices and are pulled back with rose-and-gold-colored tie ropes hung on elaborate decorated gilt hooks. Elaborate gilt mirrors rest atop the black-and-gold Italian mantelpieces. The painted baseboards continue the black marbled design around the room, although the remainder of the woodwork—including the sliding doors, window panels and door moldings—are painted the original cream color. Two rare survivals from the 19th century are the hearth rug in the back parlor and the two concave wallpapered fireplace screens. The rosewood parlor suite, in the Louis XV style, includes marble top parlor tables, three sofas, upholstered arm chairs and ottomans, and many balloon-back side chairs, finished with rose-and-moss green velvet seats. An old-fashioned square piano, purchased from the Knabe manufacturers in Baltimore, remains in the back parlor. Contemporary bills for these purchases reveal that James Bumgardner purchased most of the interior furnishings from Richmond stores and companies. The two gilt bronze gasoliers are contemporary with the house but were taken from the home of a relative and installed at a later date.

The two first-floor rooms on the west side have not been so consciously preserved, although most of the original woodwork and much of the family furniture survives. These rooms contain dark wooden mantels with designs similar to those in the double parlors. Gold fluted trim with carved corner blocks and the castellated curtain cornices suggest a more formal function for the north room than the adjoining library to the south, finished with rows of bookcases and simpler architrave-molded, cream-colored trim. There is evidence that the original mid-19th-century wallpaper may be preserved behind the present paper.

The finish in the four large bedrooms on the second floor is less elaborate. The identical classical mantel designs have carved friezes but are painted different colors. In the east room, the trim and mantel are painted white and the baseboards brown. A stained mantel, cream-colored trim, and brown baseboards finish the west room. The south room mantel has been grained in black and contrasts with pale blue trim. The brightest colors are found in the north room with the window trim and baseboard molding painted gold, the baseboards brown, the door trim blue-gray, and the baseboards on the interior wall brown.

The bathroom at the top of the stairs had originally been a trunk room. It was probably one of the first in this area, and in its unaltered form reflects many of the

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

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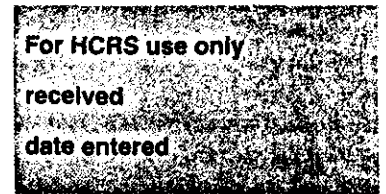
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BETHEL GREEN, AUGUSTA COUNTY, VA

Continuation sheet #2

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7. Description - Architectural Analysis

early ideals of bathroom design. Built-in cabinets stretch across one wall, and the bathroom fixtures, including a roll-rim tub, are located on the opposite wall. Everything in the room, including the little wooden chair, has been painted a sparkling, sanitary white.

The main block contains a full basement with unfinished rooms to the north and east and finished rooms to the south and west. The unfinished rooms have been plastered, but have always been used for storage. The south room served as dining space, finished with a simple Greek Revival mantel, moldings, and four-panel doors, all of which have recently been painted white. The west room originally served as a butler's pantry connecting the kitchen ell to the dining room, but the Murphys remodeled this to create a modern kitchen.

Another significant and unusual feature of this is the extensive and conveniently arranged service area. In addition to the butler's pantry was a storage pantry in the south end of the kitchen, attached to the main block. A beaded board partition separated this storage area from the main kitchen, which had been served by a chimney in the location of the present staircase. A second fireplace in the north room was used for butchering and contained a big kettle for various butchering, laundering, and other heavy-service functions. The ell has been remodeled to serve as a modern apartment, but all the major walls have been maintained, as well as an unusually large pie safe. An outside door on the northeast side of the kitchen leads out to a covered walkway or area at the ground level around the northwest side of the main house and the northeast side of the ell.

A full complement of 19th-century outbuildings echoes the lively mid-19th-century spirit of the main house. The board-and-batten and stucco buildings with their carved bargeboard trim suggest popular mid-19th-century influences, like the main house. The house is surrounded by a white picket fence, picking up on the Gothic spirit with pointed posts. Several frame farm buildings, a bank barn, granary, and shed are located north of the main house and painted the traditional red with white quadrant corners. In its entirety, Bethel Green is an amazing survival of a wealthy, 19th-century Valley farmstead.

AMcC

10. Geographical Data - Verbal Boundary Description

property line for last 500', to NW side of VA. 693; thence about 300' SW to point of origin. The bounds have been drawn to include the house and two outbuildings surrounding it to the south of VA. 701, the associated farm buildings across the road, and the pond on which the Bumgardner distillery formerly stood. The nominated acreage is also the site of a late 18th-century dwelling.

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Continuation sheet #3

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8. Significance - Background Information

few Virginia rooms of the mid-19th century to retain virtually all of their original finish including carpeting, curtains, wallpaper, painted surfaces, and furniture. The survival is largely due to one member of the family's determination to keep the rooms as she remembered them in her childhood.

The lengths to which Bumgardner went to create such a stylish setting is evident in the bills for these items, preserved in the family's papers as well. These bills provide a rare source of documentation for Virginia decorative arts of the Victorian period and demonstrate that many goods, hitherto assumed by scholars to have been acquired out of state, were readily available through Virginia dealers. According to the bills, velvet carpeting, Venetian carpeting, Brussels carpeting, and ingrain carpeting were supplied to Bethel Green by the Richmond firm of Richardson & Co. of Main Street. The firm of Doggett and Anderson, Richmond dealers in floor and oil cloths, window shades, and curtains, supplied the satin delaine curtains for the parlors as well as the gold-and-cream scroll wallpaper and borders still on the parlor walls. Doggett and Anderson also sold Bumgardner the two concave-back fireplace covers for the parlors, a type noted by experts to be extremely rare. Hardware came from the firm Johnston and Bransford of Richmond, while the still-surviving brass stair carpet rods came from Smith and Harwood, also a Richmond hardware firm. Bumgardner ordered a large quantity of table glass from Bulkley & Co. of Richmond, and china from George J. Sumner & Co. of the "Iron Building" on 14th Street in Richmond. Exceptions to the Richmond purchases are the large, square piano in the west parlor, which came from Knabe of Baltimore, and the stained glass in the entrance hall which also came from Baltimore. The whole assemblage, especially the parlors, presents a delightful, authentic picture of the rich, colorful taste of the mid-Victorian period.

Bethel Green was inherited by J. Alexander Bumgardner after James Bumgardner's death in 1890. The distillery went bankrupt in 1895, necessitating the auction of the house. It was purchased by J. Alexander Bumgardner's sister, Bettie Waddell Bumgardner Murphy (Mrs. Patrick Livingston Murphy), who rented it to her brother until she herself moved into the house in 1921 and lived there until her death in 1933. The current owner of Bethel Green is James S. Murphy, M.D., of New York City, who maintains the house as he inherited it.

VDS/AMcC/CCL

9. Bibliographical References

- Moffett, Mrs. William S., Jr. Staunton, Va. Interview.
 Murphy, James S., M.D. Family Papers and Bills including Building Contract. New York, N.Y. Richmond, Va. Virginia State Library. WPA Files.
 Wayland, John. Historic Homes of Northern Virginia. Staunton: McClure Press, 1937.
 Wright, Mrs. Wesley. Richmond, Va. Interview.

