

VLR - 8/13/85 NRHP 10/10/85

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Locust Grove (Preferred)

DHL File #23-49

and or common Goodwin Farm

2. Location

street & number Locust Grove Farm

N/A not for publication

city, town Rapidan

N/A vicinity of

state Virginia

code 51

county Culpeper

code 047

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<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:

4. Owner of Property

name John and Elizabeth Womeldorph

street & number LOCUS-GROVE Farm

city, town Rapidan

N/A vicinity of

state Virginia 22733

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Culpeper County Courthouse

street & number N/A

city, town Culpeper

state Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

File #23-49

title Division of Historic Landmarks has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1983

federal state county local

depository for survey records 221 Governor Street:

city, town Richmond

state VA 23213

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Situated on a 130.5-acre farm on the Rapidan River in southwestern Culpeper County, Locust Grove is one of the earliest small farmhouses recorded in Piedmont Virginia. The original structure was a one-room plank structure probably built in the third quarter of the 18th century. Expanded in at least four major building campaigns over the next half-century, the building had by and large achieved its present configuration by 1840. Today the house is a 1½-story log and frame structure featuring a central-chimney, two-room plan main block flanked by early gable-end lean-tos and rear additions. Carefully renovated in the 1970's, the building retains much of its early fabric. Unusual architectural features include the central-chimney floorplan; the finely furnished full-dovetail-notched plank walls of the original unit; remnants of the original crude interior detailing in this unit; and a recessed, segmental-arched front entry of a type previously unrecorded in Virginia.

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

The main house at Locust Grove occupies a slight rise near the center of a 130.5-acre farm encompassing a U-shaped bend in the Rapidan River one mile east of the village of Rapidan. Situated at the center of a shaded, four-acre yard, the house affords a view of the surrounding flat cultivated fields on both sides of the river. Willis Road (VA Rt. 736), a little-traveled gravel-surfaced road, passes east-west in a straight line about seventy-five yards north of the dwelling. The house itself faces east. A modern garage-cum-workshop and a mid-19th century smokehouse stand side-by-side behind the house to the west. About 250 yards west-southwest of the old dwelling stands a two-story frame tenant house built in the late 1930's.

Though of modest size, the main house at Locust Grove is the result of four or more building campaigns spanning two centuries. Today, the house is a 1½-story weatherboarded structure whose main block features asymmetrical four-bay fenestration. Covered by a steep gable roof pierced by two modern Colonial-style dormers, the main block is flanked by end lean-tos dating to the late 18th century or early 19th century. At the rear (west) elevation, a modern one-story lean-to and a two-story ell replace an earlier full-length lean-to. The house rests on low rubblestone foundations, and lacks a basement, although a small cellar serves as a furnace room under a 20th-century rear addition.

The main block features a two-room plan centered on the original axial brick chimney. (A chimney fire in the mid-20th century destroyed part of the roof and upper part of the chimney, which was rebuilt in modern brick.) Flanking the main block are small single-room lean-tos about seven feet in width. The modern rear additions, including a single-story shed-roofed kitchen and a two-story dining room wing, exhibit a more complex plan.

Exterior detailing dates largely to the 1970s, although original weatherboards and trim were retained wherever salvageable. The two front windows to the right of the doorway are of mid-19th century vintage, while that to the left of the door is earlier, though

(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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates N/A Builder/Architect Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Located along the Rapidan River in southwestern Culpeper County, Locust Grove is a rare example of a middle-class farmer's house of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The 1½ story log and frame building exhibits a complex evolution. Begun in the 1760s or 70s and gradually expanded until about 1840, it illustrates the gradual improvement in living conditions enjoyed by many Piedmont farm families over the course of the early Republican period. The earliest section of the house, which remains largely intact within the expanded structure, is a one-room plan unit built of hewn horizontal planks (i.e., squared logs) joined by dovetail corner notching. Subsequent phases of building over the next half-century - all in mortice-and-tenon frame construction - created an unpretentious weatherboarded structure with a two-room plan main block and lean-tos on three sides. Possibly the oldest documented building of its size in Piedmont Virginia, it displays several unusual architectural features, including full-dovetailed plank walling; a central-chimney floorplan; remnants of its crude original detailing; and a recessed, segmental-arched wooden entry porch that may be unique in Virginia. The building's well-documented history enhances its interest. Inhabited continuously from 1774 to 1867 by Isaac Willis, it remained in the hands of Willis descendants until the 1970's, when the present owners purchased and restored it. Locust Grove is significant both because of its rare and well-preserved architectural features, and because it graphically illustrates the austere living conditions prevailing among even prosperous Piedmont farm families of the Federal and antebellum periods.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Locust Grove was erected by a member of the Willis family on land patented by Governor Alexander Spotswood in the 1730's. Though best known for his political career and exploration of the Virginia frontier, Spotswood was also an acquisitive landowner and entrepreneur; as such, he was a leading figure in the colony's westward expansion into the Piedmont during the first decades of the 18th century. Through a series of shrewd maneuvers during his last years in office, Spotswood managed to accumulate a vast tract of some 85,000 acres on the western frontier, including the 40,000-acre Spotsylvania tract straddling the Rapidan in what is now Culpeper, Orange, and Spotsylvania counties.

To satisfy mandatory land-seating requirements, Spotswood and his heirs granted attractive long-term leases on the Spotsylvania tract - some extending a full generation or more - to some one hundred farm families unable to afford tracts of their own. Locust Grove Farm probably originated as one of these leases. In April 1767 William Willis,

9. Major Bibliographical References

Culpeper County Deed Books, Land Tax Books, Personal Property Tax Books, Plat Books, and Will Books.

(See Continuation Sheet #8)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 11.5

Quadrangle name Rapidan, VA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	7	7	5	8	3	5	0	4	2	4	4	9	9	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B

1	7	7	5	8	4	0	0	4	2	4	4	8	3	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

C

1	7	7	5	8	1	6	0	4	2	4	4	7	4	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

D

1	7	7	5	8	1	0	0	4	2	4	4	8	3	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

E

Zone			Easting					Northing						

F

Zone			Easting					Northing						

G

Zone			Easting					Northing						

H

Zone			Easting					Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification (See Continuation Sheet #9)

Beginning at a point on the S side of VA 736 approximately 2700' SW of point where VA 736 crosses the Rapidan River and becomes VA 689; thence extending approximately 600' SSE;

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks

organization Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks date June 1985

street & number 221 Governor Street telephone (804) 786-3143

city or town Richmond state Virginia 23219

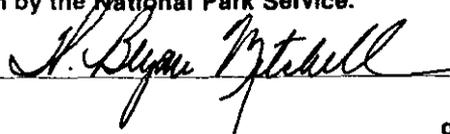
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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



H. Bryan Mitchell, Director
title Division of Historic Landmarks

date August 19, 1985

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

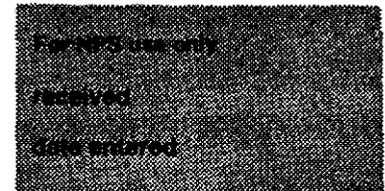
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

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LOCUST GROVE, RAPIDAN, VA

Continuation sheet #1

Item number 7

Page 1

7. DESCRIPTION--ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

probably not original. The most interesting exterior feature of the house is its recessed front entry shelter with wooden segmental-arched ceiling. This entry was reconstructed in 1978 based upon careful examination by restoration architect Milton Grigg when the house was being stripped of its interior and exterior sheathing.

Most of the interior detailing is early, but dates to various periods of occupancy between the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The main-floor room of Unit One features early pine flooring, exposed joists with beaded edges, a Federal plain-board dado, and a large fireplace that was narrowed to its present 4'-1" width in the early 1800's. The present fireplace surround is of Federal style, with a plain architrave surround and molded shelf. The batten door at the front entry has been reconstructed; other doors are early.

Interior detailing in the other ground-floor room of the main block is similar, but part of the Federal dado was taken in the 1970s from a nearby antebellum Willis family house named Quiet Shade. The Federal-style mantel in this room is somewhat fancier and perhaps later than that in Unit One. In this room too, the joists have beaded edges and were originally exposed (they were later covered with plaster, but were re-exposed by the present owners). Early six-raised-panel doors and wide pine flooring also remain in this room.

Each main-block room opens into a gable-end lean-to containing early Federal-style trim. These small rooms have narrow four-over-four-light sash windows and were probably originally unheated, being used as sleeping chambers and/or storage rooms.

A boxed stair with ninety-degree turn stands at the northwest corner of the original room, being approached from a narrow passage linking the two rooms of the main block. Probably erected before 1825, judging by the use of wrought rather than cut nails, it leads to a finished loft containing two rooms. The stair terminates on the second floor with a simple railing of rectangular balusters and chamfered posts extending to the ceiling. The south loft room, with direct access to the stair, features an early Federal mantel with tall molded shelf, and a low attic closet sheathed with wide unpainted pine boards. The north chamber contains similar early-19th-century detailing.

The rear additions to the house are modern, but in the kitchen the rear (west) log walls of the original house have been exposed to view. These logs, along with some of the strips that originally covered the interstices, are also visible in the stair closet in the original room.

Locust Grove is important architecturally both because of the rarity of its small original unit, and because its expansion illustrates the trend among Virginia farmers of the late 18th and early 19th centuries to gradually expand their dwellings to include more (and more specialized) rooms. For this reason, the remainder of this architectural

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

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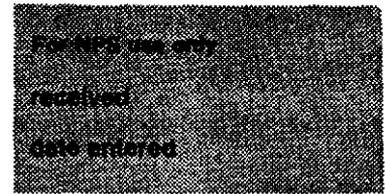
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LOCUST GROVE, RAPIDAN, VA

Continuation sheet #2

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7. DESCRIPTION--Architectural Analysis

description will detail the complex evolution of the building.

The house began as a 16' x 20' single-bay structure constructed of carefully-dressed 3½" x 10" pine planks joined at the corners by full-dovetail notching. The walls of this structure were probably neither sheathed nor painted on the exterior, though the wood-shingle roof may have been tarred originally. The house was heated by a large interior brick chimney with rubblestone base, located on the north gable end of the house and containing a cooking fireplace. The building lacked a cellar, the walls being supported by low rubblestone piers or foundations.

The interior of the house was extremely plain, with no paint or whitewash on the walls, and no interior plaster or other sheathing. To reduct drafts, 3" x 1" pine strips covered the narrow gaps between the hewn logs. A simple ladder stair led to the loft. Windows were smaller than those presently lighting the house. Indeed, there may have been no windows at either longitudinal facade: structural evidence from 1970s restoration suggests that opposing doorways at the front and rear of the house were the only openings there.

A decade or two later the house was doubled in size by a one-room plan mortice-and-tenon frame addition at the north end (chimney end) of the building. This expansion created the present central-chimney main block. The recessed, segmental-arched front entry was probably built at this time, and the original log unit was sheathed with weatherboards to match the expansion. This new north unit was approximately the same size as the original log house, but it had two rather than one front openings, and featured higher ceilings and plastered interior walls.

Between the late 18th or early 19th century and ca. 1840, four lean-to units were added to the house. Available architectural evidence does not indicate which one is earliest, or whether more than one shed was erected at a time, but one historical source asserts the south gable lean-to was added before its north counterpart. Oral reports and 1970s photos suggest that the lean-to running across the entire rear of the main block was also built in two campaigns, both probably before ca. 1840, and possibly ante 1800. All of these additions were of heavy-timber frame construction covered with weatherboards; none contained liveable loft space.

During the 19th century, the house underwent at least two major internal remodelings. The earlier of these, ca. 1825, saw the replacement of the original ladder stair by the present boxed one. The fireplace in the original main room was reduced in size, and at this same time or slightly later the north room was fitted with its present Federal-style mantel, and the upstairs loft rooms were finished off with plaster, mantels and closets. Much of the door and window trim - which varies throughout the house - was added in the early 19th century. Also, about this time, a plaster ceiling was added in the north room

(See Continuation Sheet #3)

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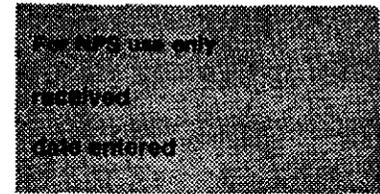
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LOCUST GROVE, RAPIDAN, VA

Continuation sheet #3

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7. DESCRIPTION--Architectural Analysis

of the main block.

In a post-Civil War remodeling, the early recessed segmental-arched entry was replaced by a simplified Greek Revival-style doorway flanked by side-lights and set flush with the front wall of the house. This new, more up-to-date entry opened into a small vestibule in front of the chimney. Several windows in the house were also moved or enlarged at this time.

Later, in the early 20th century, the rear lean-to was extended at either end to cover the entire rear of the house. Single-bay porches (since removed) were added at the front and rear entries. Interior partitions were altered in the rear lean-to, and the roof of the north gable lean-to was raised. About this same time two large shed-roofed dormers were added at the front of the house to increase space and light in the loft.

The house at Locust Grove remained unchanged from the 1930s to the late 1970s, when the present owners remodeled and enlarged the house, restoring the main block and its early gable-end lean-tos. Since the house had been built in several stages, no attempt was made to return it to any single period. Nevertheless, the house today looks largely as it did ca. 1870 or before. The only major changes made were the addition of modern Colonial-style dormers, the shortening of the south lean-to to its original form, and the replacement of the rear lean-tos by a modern kitchen/dining room wing.

An unusually early and well-preserved farm dwelling, Locust Grove illustrates the marked improvement in housing that accompanied the general rise in living conditions for middle-income farmers in late 18th and early 19th-century Virginia.

JMO

8. SIGNIFICANCE--Historical Background

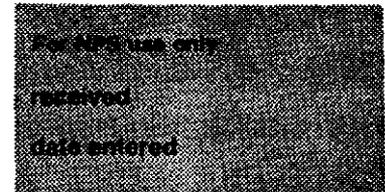
the likely builder of the house, purchased a tract from the executors of John Spotswood, son of the governor. This may well have been the same² leased land that his father, John Willis, had conveyed to him earlier in a will of 1761.²

Although the original portion of Locust Grove may possibly have been erected as a tenant farm dwelling before 1760, the architectural evidence suggests that William Willis (1743³-1802) built the one-room plan log house shortly after he purchased the parcel in 1767.³ The obituary of subsequent owner and occupant Isaac Willis (1774-1867), son of William Willis, states specifically that Isaac "died in the house in which he was born"--an unusual statement that implies the building was standing before 1774.⁴

(See Continuation Sheet #4)

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LOCUST GROVE, RAPIDAN, VA
Continuation sheet #4

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8. SIGNIFICANCE--Historical Background

This pre-1774 house was a 16' x 20' squared-log or plank structure with full-dovetail corner notching. It had a sleeping loft, but no basement, and was heated by a large brick chimney containing a cooking fireplace. The interior was spartan, having neither paint, plaster, nor sheathing, and the loft was reached by a simple ladder stair. Though extremely crude by present standards, by the standards of its day it was relatively large and well-built - a fact that accounts for its survival to the present.⁵ The centerpiece of a roughly 300-acre farm, it was from an early date surrounded by a number of small out-buildings, farm structures, and slave cabins. Of these, only one - an antebellum smoke-house - survives.

The Locust Grove property appears on the state's first tax list under the name of Joshua Willis in 1782. In an 1802 deed of gift, William Willis conveyed this same tract on the Rapidan River to his son Isaac, who acquired an adjoining 308-acre parcel from his father in 1816, after William had moved to Kentucky.⁶

Beginning in 1820, the year that the county land tax books began listing the value of buildings separately from land, the house and its outbuildings were assessed at \$500, a sum consistent with what might be expected for a house the size of Locust Grove in its expanded, two-room plan form. In 1840, a census year, the value of buildings dropped to \$300, remaining at that general level until the 20th century. This suggests that no substantial improvements were made to the property after that date.⁷

Isaac Willis owned and occupied the house from at least 1802 until his death in 1867 at age ninety-three. Family tradition states that Isaac was a member of the Virginia militia during the War of 1812, but he appears to have held no county or state offices.⁸ His obituary states that "he spent nearly the whole of his life on the premises" of his farm; that he had been a prominent member of the local Baptist church which he joined at age twenty-five; and that he had "lived in great harmony with his neighbors enjoying the confidence and esteem of all who knew him."⁹

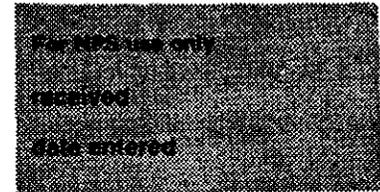
The first statewide personal property tax, levied in 1815, shows that Willis owned fourteen adult slaves as well as nine horses and fifteen head of cattle. He appears to have owned few luxury household items, however, being taxed for only a chest of drawers and one "work of metal" (probably silverware or a clock) valued at over fifty dollars.¹⁰

Tax records show that Willis continued to own between fifteen and twenty adult slaves from the 1820s through the 1850s. In 1852 he was taxed on nineteen slaves, 150 cattle, hogs and sheep, a "pleasure carriage" worth \$40, and \$120 worth of household furniture. A statistical sample of the local tax records shows that in terms of assessed wealth Willis ranked among the upper ten percent of Culpeper taxpayers.¹¹ On his death in 1867, two years after the Civil War, he left land valued at \$11,708, as well as \$1,123 worth of livestock, field implements and household furnishings.¹² This was a substantial legacy, especially considering that over half his wealth - in the form of slaves - had been lost two years earlier following emancipation.¹³

(See Continuation Sheet #5)

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LOCUST GROVE, RAPIDAN, VA
Continuation sheet #5

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8. SIGNIFICANCE--Historical Background

Willis' wealth in slaves was consonant with the size of his farmstead. He gradually doubled his holdings from 608 acres in 1816 to 1,522 acres in 1844, a figure that remained constant into the 1850s. During this same period Isaac built or purchased a grist mill on the Rapidan. Standing in 1835 or before, it was valued at \$400, a figure that suggests it was a modest framestructure of average size. Willis probably employed one of his slaves as the miller, and no doubt ground corn and wheat for neighboring farmers.¹⁴

The historical record, together with the surviving architectural evidence provided by the house, shows that Isaac Willis, like most upper middle-class Virginia farmers of the Federal and antebellum eras, lived in surroundings that would be considered modest by 20th century standards. That he owned fifteen or more adult slaves (each valued, on the average, at a figure higher than that of his house and farm buildings) suggests that he could easily have afforded a larger and more pretentious dwelling had he wanted one. Instead, he remained content with the same sort of dwelling that most of his slaveholding peers inhabited. All the same, Willis made substantial improvements to the house during his tenure, adding new interior detailing and enlarging it from a two- or four-room house to one with eight smallish rooms (counting the four lean-tos and two upstairs loft chambers). It is important to realize that while Isaac Willis and his nine-member household lived without show, they lived in much greater comfort than had his father's generation, as is demonstrated by the original one-room unit of Locust Grove.

In his 1867 will, Isaac Willis left the Locust Grove home tract, together with an adjoining 180-acre parcel, to his daughter Elizabeth Willis Garnett. In 1878 she sold the house and 418 acres to her son-in-law, James H. Goodwin. The property remained in the Goodwin family until 1970, when the present owners, Mr. and Mrs. John C. Womeldorph, purchased the dwelling and 130 acres. In the late 1970s, the Womeldorphs hired two highly respected Virginia architectural firms specializing in resoration to guide the renovation of the house. The job was completed in 1979, and today Locust Grove stands as a rare, representative example of a Federal period Piedmont farmhouse.

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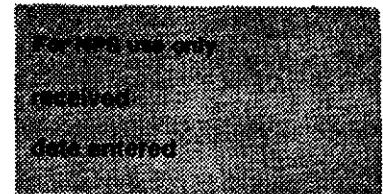
¹Paula S. Felder, Forgotten Companions: The First Settlers of Spotsylvania County (Fredericksburg, Va: Historic Publications of Fredericksburg, 1982), pp. 6-33; Richard L. Morton, Colonial Virginia, Vol. II: Westward Expansion and Prelude to Revolution, 1710-1763 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960), pp. 472-85; and Ulysses Joyner, "Map of the Early Patents of Orange County" (Orange Historical Society, Orange, Va., n.d. [ca. 1970s]).

²Culpeper County Deed Book E, p. 271. This 1767 deed describes a 265-acre parcel along a river - presumably the Rapidan. Orange County Will Book 2, p. 323. This 1761

(See Continuation Sheet #6)

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LOCUST GROVE, RAPIDAN, VA

Continuation sheet #6

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8. SIGNIFICANCE--Endnotes

will refers to "the lott in Culpeper", but does not mention the acreage. According to historian Ann Miller of the Orange County Historical Society, the term "lot" generally refers to a leased tract, rather than to a freehold. In studying several other properties that were once part of the Spotsylvania Tract, Ms. Miller has found that leased property was, as a rule, later purchased by the lessee or a member of his family once parcels began being sold off the Spotswood patent in 1767. Given the circumstantial evidence, she feels strongly that the property William Willis bought in 1767 was at least part of the land that his father John had leased and occupied before 1761. (Personal communication, Orange, Va., June 1985).

³The high quality of workmanship in the original unit of Locust Grove suggests that the house was built as the main dwelling on a freehold rather than a leasehold. This, and the fact that a house of this size built before the mid-18th century is unlikely to survive, provides a terminus ante quem of ca. 1767.

The architectural evidence, moreover, tends to support the pre-1774 date indicated by the historical record (see Note 4, below). The original portion of the house probably dates to at least the third quarter of the 18th century, since it was expanded in at least three subsequent campaigns ante 1825. If Locust Grove follows the pattern of other houses of its type and period in Virginia (e.g. Perkinsons in Chesterfield County, DHL File #20-390), these expansions probably took place gradually over the course of at least two generations.

⁴Obituary in the Religious Herald, Richmond, Va. (Jan. 2, 1868), p.3, col. 5.

⁵That the original Locust Grove was a well-built house of average size is evident by comparison with documentary records on Maryland tenant houses of the 1760s analyzed by Gregory Stiverson in Poverty in a Land of Plenty: Tenancy in Eighteenth-Century Maryland (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), pp. 58-84. Stiverson shows that 80 to 90 percent of Maryland tenant farmers lived in one- or two-room plan dwellings averaging between 278 and 558 square feet in plan. (Locust Grove is 320 square feet in plan.) Surviving Virginia houses comparable to Locust Grove include the Perkinson House and Muleshoe in Chesterfield County; Pear Valley in Northampton County; the Ball-Sellers House in Arlington County; and the Frederick Cline House in Augusta County. The first three of these houses are of frame construction. Located in the northern Piedmont, the Ball-Sellers House (ca. 1750-80) is of log construction, but it is far more crudely built than Locust Grove. The Frederick Cline House, now in ruins, was probably originally a two-bay, one-room-plan structure of squared logs (not planks), with full-dovetail corner notching like that at Locust Grove. Dating to the late 18th or early 19th centuries, it is among the oldest dwellings recorded in the Valley of Virginia. (Jeffrey M. O'Dell, Chesterfield County: Early Architecture and Historic Sites [Chesterfield, Va.: Chesterfield County, 1983], pp. 97-107; Ann McCleary, "Historic Resources in Augusta County, Eighteenth Century

(See Continuation Sheet #7)

**United States Department of the Interior
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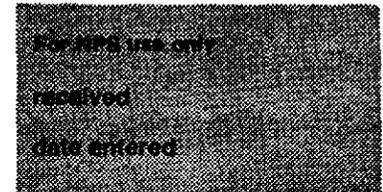
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8. SIGNIFICANCE--Endnotes

to Present", VHLC report, Harrisonburg, Va., 1983, p. 126; and NRHP reports for Pear Valley [DHL File #65-52] and Ball Sellers House [DHL File #00-9], Richmond, Va.)

⁶Culpeper County Deed Book 10, p. 100ff. This deed mentions a "cole-kiln" on the property, indicating that the Willis family was making charcoal - possibly for blacksmithing or use in some local industry.

Due to irregularities and omissions, the land tax books for this period do not show a direct transfer of the 300-acre parcel between Joshua and William Willis.

⁷The \$300 figure accords with the architectural evidence. The drop probably indicates that some of the buildings were old and/or in poor repair. The value of buildings on the Willis tract dropped to \$200 after the Civil War, then rose again to \$300 late in the 19th century. The first substantial rise in assessed value occurred in the late 1930s, when the present two-story tenant house was erected on the property.

⁸Historic Culpeper (Culpeper, Va.: Culpeper Historical Society, 1972), p. 100.

⁹Religious Herald, op. cit.

¹⁰Culpeper County Personal Property Tax Book, 1815. It is possible that Willis owned more highly-valued articles or furniture than that for which he was assessed, since tax assessors were often lax or arbitrary in their recording.

¹¹Based on a sampling by the writer of eighty other taxable persons listed consecutively in the Culpeper County Personal Property Tax Book of 1815.

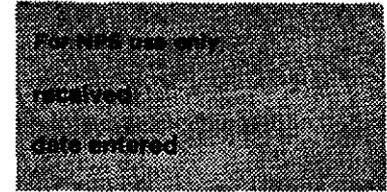
¹²Culpeper County Will Book 2, p. 327. Besides land and personal property, which Willis divided more or less evenly among his seven surviving children, he left seventy-three shares of stock in the Orange and Alexandria Railroad Company to his grandson Edward I. Willis.

¹³According to the entry on Locust Grove in Historic Culpeper (op. cit.), the house was used as a storage depot during the Civil War.

¹⁴This grist mill, known as Willis Mill, disappeared in the second half of the 19th century. The exact site is not known, but an early 20th-century deed description places it about a half-mile downstream from the house, along the northwest bank of the Rapidan. (Personal communication, Elizabeth Womeldorph, Rapidan, Va., June 1985; and Eugene M. Scheel, Culpeper: A Virginia County's History Through 1920 [Culpeper, Va: Culpeper Historical Society, 1982], p. 156).

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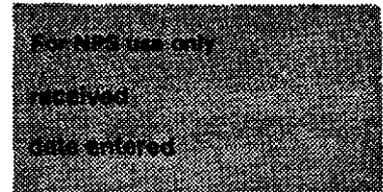
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(See Continuation Sheet #9)

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA--Boundary Description

thence approximately 800' WSW; thence approximately 200' NNW; thence approximately 150' NW; thence approximately 200' curving NE to a point on the S side of VA 736; thence approximately 600' ENE along S side of VA 736 to point of origin.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of Locust Grove encompass 11.5 acres which is a small portion of the entire 130-acre tract and a sufficient amount of open land so that the house and its buildings will have a scenic, pastoral setting.

USGS 7.5' quadrangle
Rapidan, VA

(scale:1:24000)
1971

● LOCUST GROVE, Culpeper County, VA

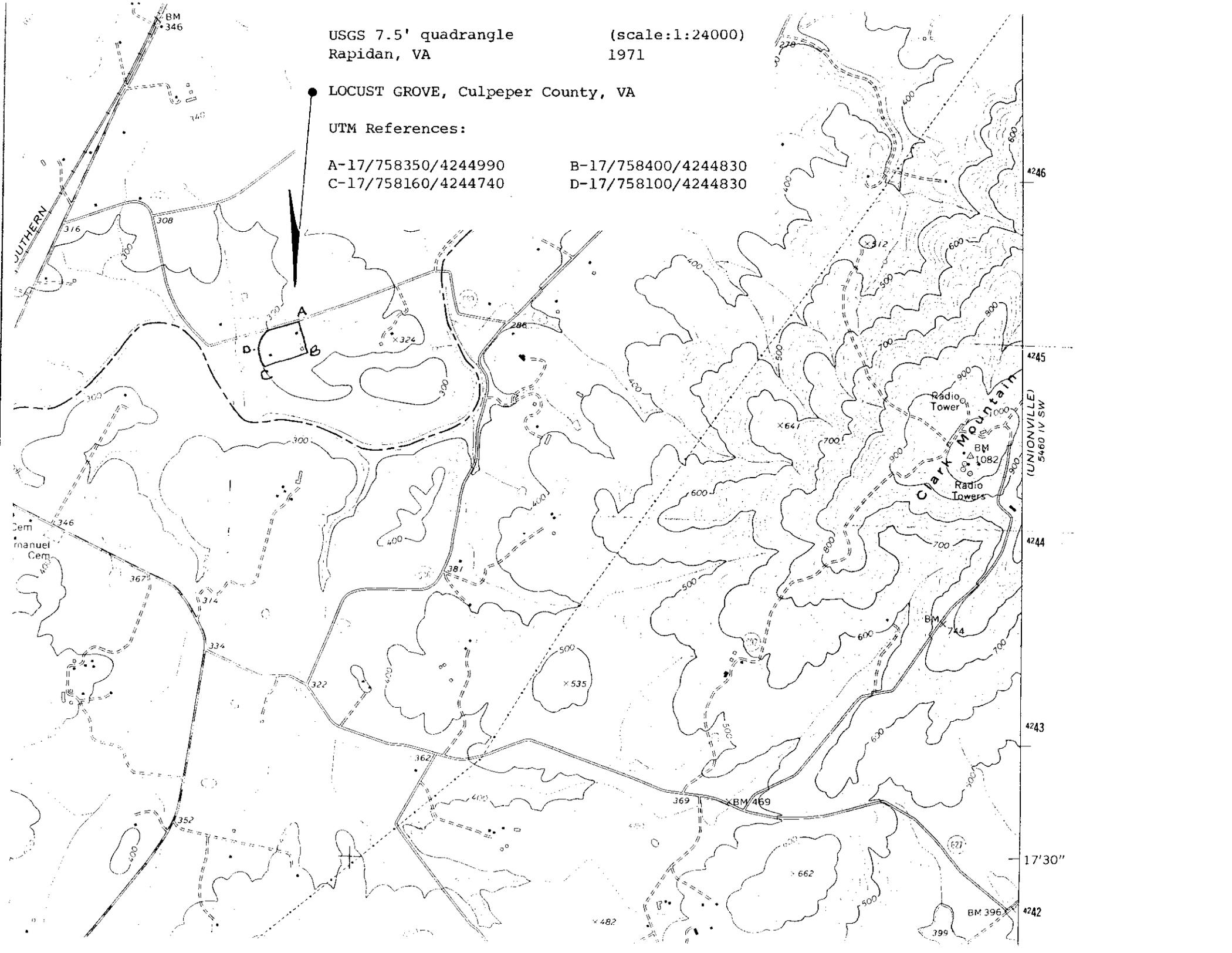
UTM References:

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SOUTHERN

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Clark Mountain
Radio Tower
BM 1082
Radio Towers

(UNIONVILLE)
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