

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Fairfax Arms

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

10712 Old Colchester Road

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Colchester

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

8th (Herbert E. Harris, II)

STATE

Virginia

VICINITY OF

CODE

51

COUNTY

Fairfax

CODE

059

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
 COMMERCIAL
 EDUCATIONAL
 ENTERTAINMENT
 GOVERNMENT
 INDUSTRIAL
 MILITARY
 MUSEUM
 PARK
 PRIVATE RESIDENCE
 RELIGIOUS
 SCIENTIFIC
 TRANSPORTATION
 OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

David R. and Marion K. Thompson

STREET & NUMBER

10712 Old Colchester Road

CITY, TOWN

Lorton

STATE

Virginia 22079

VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Fairfax County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Fairfax

STATE

Virginia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS (4) (See Continuation Sheet #1)

TITLE

(1) Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE

1937

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCALDEPOSITION FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D. C.

DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input 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

The Fairfax Arms Tavern is a modest, mid-eighteenth-century, one-and-one-half-story residence located in a semi-urban area amid various sized twentieth-century residences. The house is situated adjacent to Old Colchester Road. Erected for use as a tavern (the lots upon which the house stands were advertised in 1767 as having a dwelling suitable for an ordinary), the house has twin entrances.

The rectangular structure is approximately 25 feet by 32 feet. The longitudinal axis runs southwest-northeast, parallel to the road. Due to the sloping site, the house has a high stone base exposed on the south side. Exterior stone chimneys flank the house. Above the first floor, the west chimney is constructed of brick laid in English bond. The upper sections of both chimneys are free-standing. The cap of the west chimney was rebuilt about 1937. It was at this time that a concrete porch extending almost the full width of the house was added, replacing the earlier wood entry stoop. The small vestibule at the rear door is a modern addition. The green asphalt shingled roof, gutters and drain pipes also date from this period. Each face of the gable roof has two dormers.

The largest room is located in the southwest corner of the house and today serves as the living room. In the north wall of the room, almost directly opposite the entry door, is the door to the enclosed staircase. This four-raised-panel door is part of an interesting wall composition which includes in sequence from left to right: an angled corner fireplace; the door to the small, nine-foot-by-eleven-foot northwest room; an early nineteenth-century, floor-to-ceiling open cupboard; and the stairway door. Both doors are identical in design. The eighteen-inch-deep, open cupboard has five modern butterfly shelves. The cupboard is flanked by fluted pilasters which are intersected by the chair rail molding. The chair rail is continuous across the front of the cupboard at the level of the second shelf. There may have been doors enclosing the area below, in contrast to the shelves above. The top shelf has a beveled front edge and is fitted into the end walls. The other shelves are not original. Although there are slots in the end walls, the shelves are seated on square support brackets. Running around the top of the ten-foot-high walls, except across the chimney breast, is a simple crown molding which shifts its plane to mark the location of the doors. The mantel and the fireplace surround are rectilinear in design and appear to be original. The section of the chair rail flanking the fireplace has been added. The double-hung windows in the south and west walls have nine-over-nine-light sashes.

A framed doorway in the east wall opens to the thirteen-foot-square dining room. The fireplace located in the northeast corner has the same Greek Revival-style mantel as in the living room. The chair rail is flush with the plastered walls. An enclosed, recessed cupboard is located at the west end of the north wall. The glass, muntins, and frame of the cupboard door appear to be original. This cupboard has old butterfly shelves. A door adjacent to the cupboard opens into a modern kitchen.

The northeast room, now the kitchen, has access to the stairs and the exterior. The corner fireplace backs onto the dining room fireplace and has a simple brick arched opening without mantel or surround. Little evidence remains concerning the northwest room. The fireplace has been filled and plastered. The single window in this room has six-over-six-light sashes. The kitchen window is identical. Between these rooms is located the enclosed two-foot seven-inch-wide staircase. It turns 180 degrees around a simple square newel post. The balusters are plain rectangular slats.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 3d quarter 18th century BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The property commonly known as the Fairfax Arms Tavern is one of two surviving 18th-century buildings from the town of Colchester on Occoquan Creek in Fairfax County. Its handsome stonework, unusual plan, and surviving interior decoration, including an early 19th-century wall cupboard, are among the most striking features of this well-preserved local landmark.

Colchester was established in 1753 by an Act of the Virginia Assembly. According to a Record of Surveys (1742-1757) by G. West, Surveyor, dated June 1754, the triangular plan of Colchester included forty-one lots and a market square. Each lot was 165 feet deep by 132 feet wide. Purchasers were required to erect within two years a house "...well framed, of the dimensions of twenty feet square, and nine feet pitch at the least..." a standard provision of early Virginia's new-town acts. The village was an important port for the shipping of tobacco and other goods during the third quarter of the eighteenth century. In 1758 the firm of John Glassford & Company of Glasgow, Scotland, established a store in the town. However, due to a relocation of the road to the north, a fire which destroyed many of the buildings in the town, and the silting of the river, Colchester declined significantly by 1789. Colchester is rare among the numerous river towns which once dotted the shores of the Potomac River in that it has continued to retain its identity. For the past one hundred fifty years, the town has been dormant.

Fairfax Arms stands on lot 21 of the original town, which was purchased May 17, 1756, (along with five other lots) by Benjamin Grayson. Grayson was forced to mortgage the property in 1762 and 1763, during which time William Linton was renting lot 21 and operating an ordinary there. In 1767 Grayson advertised his three lots for sale and noted that they included a "dwelling suitable for an ordinary." The present structure may be that building. The property was sold in 1772 to Hector Ross and by Ross to Alexander Henderson a year later. In 1779 William Thompson bought it. Henderson and Thompson were both postmasters of Colchester and likely conducted the postal business at the ordinary. In 1784 Thompson advertised the property for sale in the July 15 issue of Virginia Journal and Alexandria Advertiser. The description seems to fit the present structure. The owner offered:

A large and convenient dwelling with excellent cellar, four rooms on a floor with a fireplace to each and three rooms above. Good kitchen with oven adjacent to the fireplace, a room at one end with a planked floor, lathed and plastered, glass windows, was intended for a housekeeper or white servant; stable for eight horses and a meathouse, garden and about one acre adjacent in grass well inclosed.

He nevertheless retained ownership of the property until his death in 1800. The building is extraordinarily well-documented, as the unfortunate Mr. Thompson had to prepare an exhaustive list of the furnishings and contents of his tavern and of the livestock in its outbuildings preparatory to mortgaging the property shortly before his death.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Fairfax Arms, Fairfax County, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET #1

ITEM NUMBER 6 & 7 PAGE 1

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

- (2) Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory
1959 Federal
Library of Congress
Washington, D. C.
- (3) Fairfax County Office of Comprehensive Planning
1975 County
Fairfax County History Commission
Fairfax, Virginia
- (4) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey
1978 State
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission 221 Governor Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

7. DESCRIPTION

At the second floor, the stairs enter the small hall. Immediately opposite is a recently renovated bathroom. There are three bedrooms. One extends the width of the west end of the house. The other two bedrooms divide the eastern portion of the second floor. Each room, including the bathroom, has a dormer window. The frames and sashes of many of the windows have been replaced. The window in the east end wall of the southeast bedroom was inserted about 1937. The south or front dormer windows have six-over-six-light sashes; the north dormer and west windows, four-over-four; and the new window, two-over-two-light sashes. There is a small attic area above the second floor.

The upstairs floors are of random-width pine boards. An oak floor installed in 1941 covers the original tongue-and-groove boards of the first floor. The original floor boards are about six inches in width and chamfered on the reverse side in order to obtain a tight, level fit with the joists.

The basement is entered at ground level on the west end. In the northwest corner, traces of a brick arch remain along the west wall. The modern furnace utilizes the flue in the adjacent basement fireplace. Originally the basement was used as a kitchen which had a dirt floor. An unusual feature of the original basement was that it was once a single open space. This was made possible by a truss for the first-floor framing. Thus, originally the framing for the first floor was supported by the stone perimeter walls. Steel supports have been added in recent years.

Immediately behind the house are located the original well, two sheds, and a modern covered swimming pool. The two sheds appear for the first time in the two 1937 Historic American Buildings Survey photographs. A small boxwood garden is located to the east of the house.

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Fairfax Arms, Fairfax County, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET #2

ITEM NUMBER 7, 8, 9, 11 PAGE 2

7. DESCRIPTION

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

The register bounds, a small rectangle enclosing the house, approximate the bounds of the original lot 21 of Colchester town.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

Thompson's widow again advertised the lot in 1802 as "that wellknown property located in the town of Colchester occupied for many years as a tavern and now in possession of Dr. Blake." It is worth noting that despite its being "well-known" and so frequently offered for sale, no name appears for it in the 18th-century documents. In 1811 county commissioners, acting to settle Thompson's estate, sold the tavern property to Peter Wagener; in 1835 it came into the possession of Thomas Baird. At that time, its building valuation in the land tax books, \$230, was among the highest in Colchester.

MTP/TS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Netherton, Nan; Sweig, Donald; Artemel, Janice; Hickin, Patricia; and Reed, Patrick. Fairfax County, Virginia: A History. Fairfax, Va., 1978.
Sprouse, Edith Moore. Colchester, Colonial Port on the Potomac. Fairfax, Va., 1975.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

(2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
221 Governor Street (804) 786-3144
Richmond, Virginia 23219

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Davis, John. Travels of Four Years and a Half in the United States of America during 1798, 1799, 1800, 1801 and 1802. New York, 1909.
- Duncan, Mrs. Robert V. H. "Fairfax Arms and Colchester." Historical Society of Fairfax County, Virginia, Inc. 9 (1964-65): 20-2.
- Historic American Buildings Survey and Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, comp. Virginia Catalog. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1976.
- (See Continuation Sheet #1)

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1/2 acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Fort Belvoir, VA - MD.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 18 305510 4282160

B

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The half-acre comprising the Fairfax Arms property is bounded by a rectangle measuring approximately 132'x165', the 132' fronting on old Colchester Road.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

FORM PREPARED BY

(2) (See Continuation Sheet #1)

NAME/TITLE

(1) Thomas M. Slade

ORGANIZATION

DATE

October, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

3901 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.

(202) 244-1256

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Washington

D. C. 20008

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

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

Tucker Hill, Executive Director
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE DEC 19 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

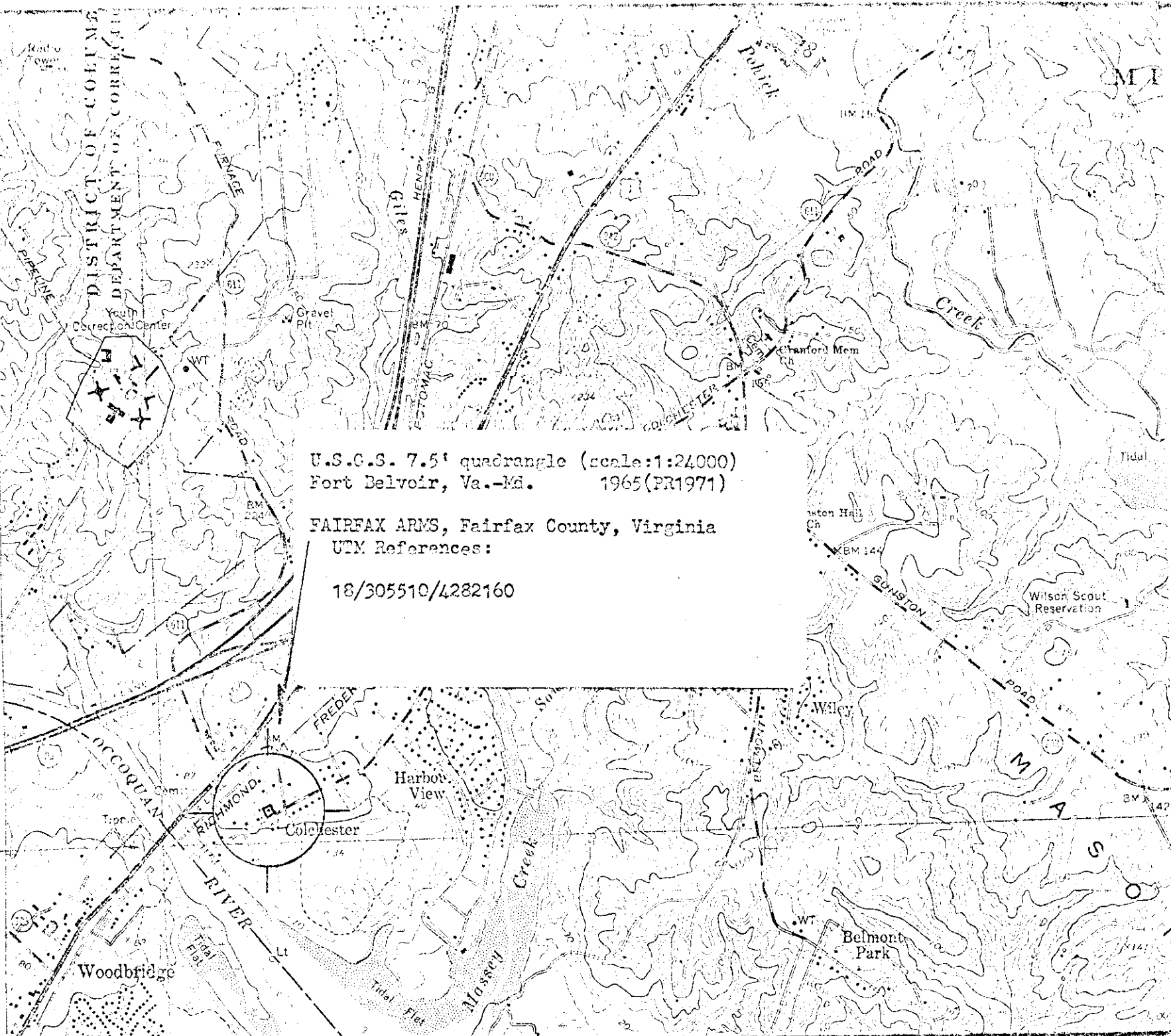
DATE

ATTEST: KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

5651 III NE (OCCOQUAN)
4285
4281
1 - DISTANCE CROSSING 23 MI.
8 MI TO VA 224
40



U.S.G.S. 7.5' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)
Fort Belvoir, Va.-Md. 1965(PR1971)

FAIRFAX ARMS, Fairfax County, Virginia
UTM References:

18/305510/4282160

