1. NAME
   Bremo Recess, and Lower Bremo (Bremo Historic District)
   AND/OR HISTORIC
   Bremo Recess, and Lower Breemo

2. LOCATION
   STREET AND NUMBER: .3 miles North of James River 2.4 miles West of Route 15,
   .9 miles North of Intersection of Route 15 and Route 656.
   CITY OR TOWN: Bremo Bluff

3. CLASSIFICATION
   CATEGORY
   (Check One)
   □ District □ Building
   □ Site □ Structure
   □ Object
   OWNERSHIP
   □ Public □ Private
   □ Both
   PUBLIC ACQUISITION:
   □ In Process □ Being Considered
   STATUS
   □ Occupied □ Unoccupied
   □ Preservation work
   ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
   □ Yes: □ Restricted
   □ Unrestricted
   □ No

   PRESENT USE
   (Check One or More as Appropriate)
   □ Agricultural □ Government
   □ Commercial □ Industrial
   □ Educational □ Military
   □ Entertainment □ Museum
   □ Religious □ Scientific
   □ Transportation □ Other (Specify)
   □ Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY
   OWNER'S NAME
   Joseph Forney Johnston (Bremo) Mrs. Cary H. Cocke (Lower Bremo)
   STREET AND NUMBER: Bremo Bluff
   CITY OR TOWN: Fluvanna County
   STATE: Virginia
   CODE: 01

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
   COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS ETC:
   Fluvanna County Clerk's Office
   STREET AND NUMBER:
   CITY OR TOWN: Palmyra
   STATE: Virginia
   CODE: 45

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
   TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Buildings Survey
   DATE OF SURVEY: 1940
   DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
   Library of Congress
   STREET AND NUMBER:
   CITY OR TOWN: Washington
   STATE: District of Columbia
   CODE: 08
Bremo Plantation contains nearly a dozen structures of architectural interest and significance. Chief among these is the principal residence, Upper Bremo, a five-section brick structure in the Palladian style popularized in the area by Thomas Jefferson. The central block of the house is two stories on the entrance façade and one story on an English basement on the river front. The house was originally covered by a flat roof of ridge and valley construction used so frequently by Mr. Jefferson. As this type of roof leaked badly, it was replaced with the present hipped roof by General John Hartwell Cocke not many years after the house was completed. Upper Bremo contains many other architectural features so often associated with Jefferson's work, especially with the use of the Tuscan order in the portico, loggia, and side porches, the Chinese lattice railings on the esplanades, and the changes of ground level from one side of the complex to the other. The interior of Bremo also exhibits many Jeffersonian features such as the very high ceilings in the principal rooms, bed alcoves, narrow staircases, upstairs rooms with low ceilings, and a generous use of full entablatures and pedimented doorways in the principal rooms. The oak graining found on the woodwork of all the principal rooms except the parlor is thought to be the original finish.

Upper Bremo has been preserved with remarkably few changes and is currently undergoing a long-term renovation. Even the original benches in the schoolroom in one of the end pavilions remain. The outbuildings just to the east of the east end pavilion also survive in a good state of repair.

Other structures located on the Upper Bremo tract include the massive and unusual stone barn with its Tuscan portico, brick dressings, and central cupola. Adjacent to the barn is the stone and brick milk house with its high hipped roof and central pediment, and the large stable which also features the stone and brick construction of the buildings associated with General Cocke.

Southeast of the house at the foot of the bluff is the Temperance monument, a stone Greek Doric pavilion di-style in antis. Although the monument has been moved from its original location on the James River and Kanawha Canal, the setting has been carefully reproduced; the monument now overlooks a long basin near the opposite end of which is the large pitcher-shaped iron urn through which poured water from the spring.

Other buildings connected with Upper Bremo are the two rare pise slave quarters constructed under the supervision of General Cocke and the board and batten slave chapel.

Two other groups of buildings, Bremo Recess and Lower Bremo make up the remainder of the Bremo Historic District. Bremo Recess, originally constructed in ca. 1803-1809 was enlarged and redesigned ca. 1844 in the Jacobean style about the same time that Lower Bremo was being built. Bremo Recess, according to General Cocke was "copied from... The well remembered old six chimney house in Williamsburg, once the property of the Custis family and Bacon's Castle in Surry." Bremo Recess is curviform in plan (continued)
### Significance

#### Period (Check One or More as Appropriate)
- [ ] Pre-Columbian
- [ ] 16th Century
- [ ] 17th Century
- [ ] 18th Century
- [ ] 19th Century
- [ ] 20th Century

#### Specific Dates (If Applicable and Known)

#### Areas of Significance (Check One or More as Appropriate)
- [ ] Aboriginal
- [ ] Prehistoric
- [ ] Historic
- [ ] Agriculture
- [ ] Architecture
- [ ] Art
- [ ] Commerce
- [ ] Communications
- [ ] Conservation
- [ ] Education
- [ ] Engineering
- [ ] Industry
- [ ] Invention
- [ ] Landscape
- [ ] Literature
- [ ] Military
- [ ] Music
- [ ] Natural History
- [ ] Political
- [ ] Religion/Philosophy
- [ ] Science
- [ ] Sculpture
- [ ] Social/Humanitarian
- [ ] Theater
- [ ] Transportation
- [ ] Urban Planning
- [ ] Other (Specify)

### Statement of Significance

General John Hartwell Cocke (1780-1866), noted planter, soldier and reformer, was a man of great importance in ante-bellum Virginia. A graduate of the College of William and Mary (1794-99), Cocke spent his life in the various reform movements of the first half of the 19th century. During the War of 1812 he entered the army as a captain and within 18 months had emerged as a brigadier general. After the war he settled into his routine of managing his extensive land holdings in Fluvanna County and in furthering his reform goals. He advanced many revolutionary agricultural ideas and vigorously attacked the practice of making tobacco the main crop of Virginia. He was equally outspoken on the subject of slavery and served as senior vice-president of the American Colonization Society from its creation in 1819 until his death. He was a leading temperance leader of the period, serving as president of the American Temperance Union in 1836. A strong believer in public education, Cocke not only supported Mr. Jefferson in the formation of the University of Virginia but was also a member of the Board of Visitors for 33 years from 1819 until 1852. It has been stated that Cocke "without being either a prig or a Puritan, ... was a zealous reformer; yet even those who impugned his principles admired his sincerity, catholic benevolence, and alertness to civic responsibility. The causes which he supported indicate him to have been one of the most remarkable Virginians of his generation in power of foresight, a pioneer of modern social reform."

General Cocke first moved from his home in Surry County to his property in Fluvanna County about 1803. He named his property in Fluvanna in honor of the old Cocke family home in Henrico County. While Upper Bremo, the main residence, was being built, General Cocke and his family made their home at Bremo Recess, a small frame house which Cocke substantially rebuilt in its present Jacobean form circa 1844.

About the same time General Cocke enlarged Bremo Recess, he also substantially rebuilt another small house on the property, Lower Bremo, adding to it Jacobean embellishments similar to those on Bremo Recess. Lower Bremo was rebuilt for General Cocke's son Cary, but Cocke made it his own residence for the last 12 years of his life. In 1918-1919 the interior of the house was completely remodeled.

For the design of Upper Bremo, Cocke sought the advice of both friends and professionals, among whom were Thomas Jefferson and a Richmond architect named Conneley. While the resulting mansion contains many of the architectural forms and devices found in Mr. Jefferson's work, the final architect (continued)
9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


Deed Book 25, Fluvanna County Court House, pp. 181-182.

Deed Book 69, Fluvanna County Court House, p. 180.


(continued)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CORNER</th>
<th>LATITUDE</th>
<th>LONGITUDE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>37° 45' 00&quot;</td>
<td>78° 20' 46&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td>37° 45' 00&quot;</td>
<td>78° 17' 32&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>37° 42' 37&quot;</td>
<td>78° 17' 32&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW</td>
<td>37° 42' 37&quot;</td>
<td>78° 20' 46&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1,500 acres

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>COUNTY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>COUNTY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>COUNTY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

FORM PREPARED BY

W. B. Norton III, Architect

ORGANIZATION: Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, History Division, HSS, National Park Service

DATE: Aug. 21, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER: 801 - 19th Street, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington

STATE: D.C.

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☐

NAME ____________________________

TITLE ____________________________

DATE ____________

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

DATE ____________

ATTEST: ____________________________

Keeper of The National Register

DATE ____________
7. **Description**: (1) Bremo Recess, and Lower Bremo (Bremo Historic Dist.)

With curvilinear end gables, and diagonally set chimney stacks, the central section of the front elevation has an enclosed entrance porch with three pointed arch bays. Above, in the decorated gable is an enclosed room. The interior of Bremo Recess, perhaps remaining from the first early-19th century house is neo-classical in style. The principal feature is a triple arched "screen" dividing the wide central hall. The two side arches have solid, paneled doors, the center arch has a removeable panel that can be taken down in the summer. All three arches have semi-circular glazed transoms and painted to resemble marble.

Bremo Recess has several notable outbuildings including a brick and stone guest house with a steep gable roof and parapet gable ends, also a long low stone stable, barn, carriage house with three two-story pavilions.

Lower Bremo built ca. 1844 also in the Jacobean style is a long two-story house of brick and stone with a H-shaped plan. It is believed that it is an enlargement of a much smaller "hunting lodge" erected in the mid-18th century. In 1918-1919, the interior of Lower Bremo was completely remodeled and the central section of the house, originally two levels, was made into one large space with a stair and balcony along two sides. Lower Bremo also retains a massive stone and timber barn erected ca. 1840.
was actually John Neilson, a master carpenter who had worked for Mr. Jefferson at Monticello. It was Neilson who interpreted all of the ideas and sketches received or drawn by Cocke and who gave the house its final appearance. Completed in 1820, Upper Bremo has been described by Fiske Kimball as the most nearly perfect "of all the houses in the Jeffersonian tradition."

**Bremo Historic District**

Bremo Historic District, Fluvanna County, Virginia consists of three plantation house groupings and their outbuildings and dependencies all built on Bremo Plantation by General John Hartwell Cocke (1780-1866) between 1803 and 1845. The first to be constructed was Bremo Recess (1803-1809); the second and most important of the three, Upper Bremo, was completed in 1820; the last was Lower Bremo built ca. 1844 at the same time Bremo Recess was extensively remodeled.

Upper Bremo is designed in the palladian Roman Revival Style made popular by Thomas Jefferson. The man who designed Upper Bremo was John Neilson a master carpenter who had worked at Monticello. Upper Bremo has been described by Fiske Kimball as the most nearly perfect of all the houses in the Jeffersonian Tradition. Also at Upper Bremo is the large stone barn which is undoubtedly the finest neo-classical barn in the United States.

Bremo Recess and Lower Bremo achieved their present exterior form ca. 1844 and on both rare examples of Jacobean Revival architecture.

The entire group of houses and farm buildings at Bremo taken together form one of the most remarkable collections of early-19th century structures in the country. Not only do they possess outstanding architectural interest but having always remained in the possession of the family that built them they present an undisturbed and remarkably well preserved social document of early-19th century America.

**Bremo Historic District property description:**

Southern Boundary: running along the north bank of the James River from John H. Cocke Memorial Bridge to the mouth of Bremo Creek.
West Boundary: running approximately .65 miles along Bremo Creek (East Fork) from the James River.
East Boundary: running approximately .8 miles along U.S. Route 15 from James River.
North Boundary: beginning approximately .8 miles up U.S. Route 15 from James River following northern boundary of Bremo Recess property, as recorded, in a straight line to intersection with Bremo Creek (east fork).

9. References: (1)
Hodson, Peter, "The Design and Building of Bremo, 1815-1820," (MA thesis, University of Virginia, 1967.)
Bremo Historic District: floor plan of Upper Bremo House

PLATE LXXIV. Bremo: Plan, showing group of buildings and terraced lawn