

VLR-3/18/75  
file NARA-6/5/75

Form 10-300  
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Virginia
COUNTY: Hanover
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Rural Plains

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Rural Plains

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER: .4 mile northeast of Totopotomoy Creek; south side of Route 606; .6 mile southwest of intersection of Route 606 and 643.

CITY OR TOWN: (Mechanicsville vicinity) CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Seventh (J. Kenneth Robinson)

STATE: Virginia	CODE: 51	COUNTY: Hanover	CODE: 085
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**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <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 (Specify)

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME: William R. Shelton, Jr.

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Mechanicsville STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Hanover County Court House

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Hanover Court House STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS (2)**

TITLE OF SURVEY: (1) Historic American Buildings Survey (see continuation sheet #1)

DATE OF SURVEY: 1936  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: D. C. CODE: 11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Virginia	COUNTY: Hanover	ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
CITY OR TOWN: Mechanicsville			

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Rural Plains stands in a grove of trees above the Totopotomoy Creek near its junction with Strawhorn Creek, in the Rural Point section of Hanover County. The house is a five-bay, story-and-a-half gambrel-roof structure built in the mid-eighteenth century of brick laid in Flemish bond with glazed headers both above and below the beveled water table. Rubbed brick is used on the jack arches and jambs of the first-floor windows (which also have molded throatings), on the door jambs, and on the corners of the building. A multitude of putlog holes pierce both gable ends.

Large six-over-six sash are used in all of the first-floor windows. Though the openings of these windows have not been disturbed, the frames date from a remodeling in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, and the present sash were probably installed then. An additional window opening was cut in each gable end around 1915, according to the owner. Each of the four front and five rear hipped-roof dormers, as well as the front porch chamber, has nine-over-six sash. The basement windows have segmental openings, some of which have grills with horizontal diagonally set wooden mullion bars.

A modillion cornice embellishes the house's eaves. Its haphazard application, covering a large portion of the rubbed-brick window arches, raises questions about its originality to the house. Square interior-end-chimney stacks with corbelled caps and plastered bands crown the roof ridge.

Frame porches are on the front and the rear of the house. That on the rear, one-story high, is obviously a later addition. The front porch, a one-story wooden structure with a small chamber over it, is an enigma. The porch is late; the present owner recalls its being renewed within his lifetime. The chamber, however, with its early sash and interior woodwork, including a two-panel, raised-panel door with HL hinges and a wooden box lock, is to all appearances original, although it forms an awkward protrusion on the facade.

In plan, Rural Plains is a central-passage, double-pile house, with its front rooms deeper than the rear rooms. Corner fireplaces heat each room, and the stairs rise near the back door against the rear wall, turn, and ascend the rest of the way in the wall space.

Little original woodwork remains in the house. What there is consists of some two-panel and four-panel doors with HL hinges and two with box locks (one lock has recently been removed but is preserved in the house) on the second floor and the closed-string stair with its turned balusters on the first floor. Fragments of double-beaded chair board throughout the building suggest that any more elaborate decoration was confined to mantels or chimney breasts.

Rural Plains underwent a major remodeling, apparently in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, and most of the trim in the house dates from this period. It is very high quality Greek Revival work. Doors and windows in the main rooms are framed with full-height symmetrically molded trim having corner blocks carrying acanthus leaves. The door into the parlor, composed of two tall applied-mold panels grained in imitation of maple, is particularly impressive. Its brass-colored box lock bears a medallion with the inscription (see continuation sheet # 2).

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian;       16th Century       18th Century       20th Century  
 15th Century       17th Century       19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy            | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                        | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture                      | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Anthropology | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <del>XXXXXX</del>   | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater                        | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                 | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |   | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Rural Plains, situated in a sparsely settled area of Hanover County, is a handsome specimen of a substantial, non-academic rural Virginia farmhouse. It is noteworthy both for its splendid mid-eighteenth-century brickwork and for its long--nine generations--tenure in the hands of the Shelton family. It was reputedly in the parlor of Rural Plains that Sarah Shelton was wed to Patrick Henry in 1754.

The history of Rural Plains began in the 1670s with the grant of the land in (then) New Kent County to the first John Shelton. Although the house is popularly assumed to have been built at that time, architectural evidence--brickwork, window size, and the original gambrel roof, a form which probably was not used in Virginia before late in the second quarter of the eighteenth century--argues for a construction date in the middle of the eighteenth century at the earliest.

A subsequent John Shelton was the keeper of the tavern at Hanover Court House. It was his daughter whom Patrick Henry married. As a wedding present, Shelton deeded to his daughter and son-in-law 300 acres of Rural Plains, which became known as Pine Slash. The so-called "Honeymoon Cottage" that was part of Shelton's present still stands about a mile from the Rural Plains house.

Since that time, Sheltons have continued to live at Rural Plains. The present owner, William R. Shelton, Jr., is the ninth-generation owner of the land, making Rural Plains one of Virginia's longest, direct, continuous tenures by one family.

DTU

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Commemorative Historical Edition. Herald-Progress (Ashland, Va.), August 1971.

Farrar, Emmie Ferguson and Emilee Hines. Old Virginia Houses Along the Fall Line. New York: Hastings House, Publishers, 1971.

Page, Rosewell. Hanover County--Its History and Legends. Richmond, 1926.

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			D R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 125 acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission      DATE: March 1975

STREET AND NUMBER:  
221 Governor Street

CITY OR TOWN: Richmond,      STATE: Virginia      CODE: 51

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION	NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION
<p>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:</p> <p>National <input type="checkbox"/>    State <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>    Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name _____ Junius R. Fishburne, Jr., Exec. Director Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Title _____</p> <p>Date <b>MAR 16 1975</b></p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p>_____ Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p>_____ Keeper of The National Register</p> <p>Date _____</p>

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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

(Continuation Sheet) #1

STATE	
Virginia	
COUNTY	
Hanover	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory  
1959 Federal

Library of Congress  
Washington, D. C. code: 11

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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(Continuation Sheet) #2

STATE Virginia	
COUNTY Hanover	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

7. DESCRIPTION

tion "Carpenters Patentees". Similar locks are found on the front and rear entrance doors.

All of the mantels in the house are plain, having Roman Doric colonettes carrying a shelf above a full, unadorned entablature. The fireplaces on the second floor have been closed and their mantels removed, but according to the owner, they were similar to those on the first floor.

DTU



Compiled, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
 Control by USGS and USC&GS  
 Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial

