

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

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Sibley's and James Store Historic District

other names/site number Sibley Bros. General Store, Old Thomas James Store, The Old Store, VDHR# 057-5049

2. Location

street & number 239 Main Street (Main & Maple Streets) not for publication

city or town Mathews vicinity

state Virginia code VA county Mathews code 115 zip code 23109

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide X local

Signature of certifying official

2/3/2010

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

LISTED ON:

VLR	12/17/2009
NRHP	03/24/2010

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| X | private |
| | public - Local |
| | public - State |
| | public - Federal |

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| | building(s) |
| X | district |
| | site |
| | structure |
| | object |

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

1

6. Function or Use**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade: Department Store (General Store)

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture: Museum (Visitor's Center)

Vacant/Not In Use

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian

Other: 19th-century Antebellum Store**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Brick, Concrete

walls: Weatherboard

Concrete

roof: Asphalt

other: Wood (cornices, porch)

Wood shingle (eaves); Brick (chimneys)

Narrative Description(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

See Continuation Sheets

8. Statement of Significance**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce**Architecture****Period of Significance**

c. 1810-1959

Significant Dates

c.1810, c.1840, 1899

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Period of Significance (justification)

See Continuation Sheets

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

See Continuation Sheets

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

See Continuation Sheets

Narrative Statement of Significance (provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance)

See Continuation Sheets

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

See Continuation Sheets

9. Major Bibliographical References**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other

Virginia Dept. of Historic Resources, Richmond,
VA; Mathews County Courthouse, Mathews, VA;

Name of repository: Mathews Memorial Library, Mathews, VA

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.1268
 (Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>18</u>	<u>383163</u>	<u>4143789</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

3	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
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2	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
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4	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Laurie P. Whiteway

organization N/A date 07/22/2009

street & number 731 E. Henry St., Upper telephone 540-908-9328

city or town Savannah state GA zip code 31401

e-mail whitewlp@gmail.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive black and white photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

See Continuation Sheets

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Sibley's and James Store Historic District

Mathews County, Virginia

N/A

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Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The Sibley's and James Store Historic District consists of three commercial buildings—two now connected to form a single building--constructed between c.1810 and 1899: The Old Thomas James Store, Sibley's General Store, and a third building that appears to have been used as a store at one time and is now connected to Sibley's by a hyphen. Due to the connection of two of the buildings, the two are counted as one building and the district is considered to have two buildings. The district is located in downtown Mathews, Virginia, and occupies a single lot spanning less than half an acre and bounded on the west and north by Main Street and Maple Avenue. The buildings appear to have been utilized as general stores at some point in their history, and allow us to view the evolution of rural commercial architecture in Mathews over a 200 year period. As a testament to their construction dates and the changing role played by local general stores over time, the three buildings differ in craftsmanship and style. Sibley's General Store, constructed in 1899, is a two-and-a-half story folk Victorian wood frame building with a full front porch, weatherboard exterior cladding, and wood shingle decoration at the eaves. Behind Sibley's, connected by a later one-story hyphen, is a c.1840 one-story wood frame building with a full attic, weatherboard exterior cladding, and unfinished interior. At the far east end of the property is the c.1810 Old Thomas James Store, a one-story vernacular front gabled wood building with an attic, weatherboard exterior, and later shed-roof additions on the east and west elevations. All three buildings have undergone some alterations, most notably the Old Thomas James Store, which was likely moved from its original location facing Main Street. It is a possibility that the c.1840 building behind Sibley's was moved at one time as well. However, all three buildings still retain much of their original historic fabric, and are significant both historically and architecturally.

Narrative Description

Old Thomas James Store (contributing)

Exterior

The Old Thomas James Store is located to the rear of Sibley's General Store and the attached c.1840 store, bordered on the north by Maple Avenue. The original store is rectangular in shape with an area of approximately 375 square feet, with rectangular single-story shed-roof additions on the east and west sides of the building that were added at the beginning of the twentieth century. It was built with an "English frame," meaning that it has a joined box frame with a base of continuous sills. The joints are mortise and tenons that are pegged only at the more significant joints. The structural timbers are hewn square and pit-sawn, a technique which was commonplace in Virginia until approximately 1820. The nails used in framing the store are machine cut with double-struck heads, which were only commonly used in the area between 1805 and the early 1820s. The foundation of the Old Thomas James Store is of brick piers laid in English bond with concrete block infill. This is probably not the original foundation, as the building was likely moved and set on a new foundation. However, since English bond was not commonly used past about 1825, the foundation is early if not original.¹ It appears that the building originally sat above a raised cellar, rather than the crawl space that currently separates the floor joists from the ground. The joists beneath the store are limewashed beneath the floorboards; this aesthetic detail only makes sense if the joists were to be seen from below, as in the case of a cellar.²

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The Old Thomas James Store has a gable roof with an approximately 40 degree pitch; since it is likely that the original front façade (facing Main Street, or west) of the building was the side that now faces east, the gable was originally side-oriented. The roof of the store is currently covered in asphalt shingles, which are a modern alteration. Early roofing shingles were found in the rafters of the shed additions, having been used to shim up the rafter feet. These shingles likely came from the roof of the store when it was reshingled, and were square butt shingles that had been laid with an exposure of approximately 6 ¾ inches. The store is clad in mill-sawn beaded weatherboard siding with corner boards. This is not the original siding, which was likely replaced with the construction of the east and west shed additions. The placement of the original weatherboard can be seen in parts of the exterior east wall, where framing is exposed. Dirt and debris from inside of the wall had collected on the upper edge of each original weatherboard, leaving behind a mark on the exterior of the stud even after the cladding was removed. Measuring the distance between these marks shows that the exposure of the original weatherboards was between 7 inches and 7 3/8 inches.³

The Old Thomas James Store does not have a standing chimney. However, the building did at one time have a chimney on the current north gable elevation, with a fireplace in the counting room of the store. A chimney thusly located is almost universal in existing rural southern stores with a similar floor plan from this time period. The sill on the north elevation of the building has a gap centered under the gable of the façade, with an insert of timber to close the gap. This is where the chimney, with a width of 55 inches, would have risen from the foundation. The two cut ends of the sill can be seen from the inside of the building beneath the floorboards, and each has been chased with a lap mortise into which the header of the hearth would have been inserted. As there is no visible evidence of a fireplace at the attic level of the north gable, it is likely that the chimney had a set of shoulders at approximately attic floor level that narrowed the stack.⁴

Most of the store's original openings are no longer visible from the exterior, as they have been covered with weatherboard or are obstructed by the newer east and west wings. On the south elevation is a batten board double-leaf door which serves as an entrance to the building. Originally, this doorway would have faced the alley to the north of the building, and was probably used to load goods from the alley into the retail room. Although this opening is original, it was enlarged at some point and the original doorway, likely holding a double-width or "folding" door, was destroyed. The other original opening that can still be seen on the building's exterior is the garret or attic doorway directly above the double-leaf door on the south elevation. Although the framing of the opening is original, the batten board door, sill, and linings for the head and jamb are modern additions. This doorway was likely used for loading and unloading goods from the alley into the attic storage area of the building.

There are three openings on the east elevation of the original store, which are no longer visible on the building's exterior due to the east wing addition. The first is a double-leaf wood batten door, which would have served as the store's main entrance. This door is double-sheathed, with an interior horizontal layer and an exterior vertical layer of laminated sheathing secured together with clinched rosehead nails. The doors are hung on strap hinges with driven pintles and are secured on the interior by a wooden bar that is held at each jamb by a pair of closed keepers. The other two openings on the east elevation are windows; one of which lit the retail room, and the other the counting room. The retail space window has been enlarged into a doorway, but evidence of the original window can still be seen in the frame. The 4/4 wood sash counting room window is approximately centered on the east wall of the original room. The exterior shutters on the window

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are original and, like the doors, are of double-layered sheathing with a beaded edge. They are hung on H-shaped side hinges. The shutters are secured by a wrought iron bar hung on a pin at the top of the jamb and run diagonally across the exterior of the window. A pin at the lower end of the bar would be wedged inside the shutters so that they could not be opened from the exterior.

On the north elevation of the store, covered on the exterior by weatherboard, is a single original double-sheathed door set against the northwest corner post which served as an exit from the counting room. It is secured by a stock lock and staple, as well as a wooden bar set in keepers like that on the east entrance. This door swings on small H-L hinges, which are secured to the frame by clinched nails with leather botching behind the heads. At the garret level of the north façade, also covered on the exterior with weatherboard, are two small windows. Originally, these would have flanked the chimney stack.

There are several exterior openings on the east and west shed roof additions that are not original to the store. The west wing now serves as one of the building's principle entrances, and features a modern single-leaf wood paneled door with four lights. On each side of the door are wood tripartite windows, each consisting of a central square fixed light flanked by 2/2 wood sash windows. On the south elevation of the east wing is a single-leaf, double-sheathed wood batten door hung on strap hinges. Although this opening is not original to the store, it is possible that the double-sheathed door was reused from the original south façade opening after it was widened and a new double-leaf door installed.⁵

Interior

The original 15 feet by 25 feet store was originally divided into two rooms by a partition wall. The larger of the two rooms, currently on the southern end of the building, was the retail room. It was connected to the smaller northern counting room by an interior doorway near the center of the partition wall. The location of the partition wall can be seen in the joist above the vanished wall. The store's main entrance on the east elevation, as well as a freight loading door on the south elevation, opened into the retail room. A single exit door from the counting room was located in the northwest corner of the room. A staircase to the store's attic was located in the southwest corner of the counting room, against the wall partition. The staircase was removed sometime in the nineteenth century, and it is uncertain whether it was a conventional wooden stair, or a simpler ladder stair. The attic space of the building is a single unfinished room over the same footprint as the ground floor.

The wall and ceiling finishes in the retail room differ from those in the counting room, due to the likelihood that the counting room was intended to be finished with plaster. This is common among early stores; the counting room would have been

the more nicely finished of the two rooms, while the retail room would have been simply sheathed to simplify wall shelving. In the retail room, the walls retain their original finish. They are sheathed with wide horizontal boards that are planed on their outer face and have a narrow beaded edge. The exposed ceiling joists are planed and beaded, and the underside of the flooring above is also planed smooth. This is an indication that the ceiling was meant to be exposed from the time of construction. In contrast, the counting room walls are covered in horizontal bevel-edged board sheathing that dates to a remodeling that likely occurred in the third quarter of the nineteenth century.⁶ This sheathing predates the removal of the partition wall between the counting and retail rooms, as it stops at the vanished wall. The counting room is trimmed out to be plastered, with an original base board, beaded chair board, and window trim. The hewn and pit-sawn

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ceiling joists were left unplaned, and the flooring above was gauged and undercut rather than smooth finished, indicating that the ceiling was to be covered in plaster as well. However, though the room was obviously intended to be plastered, it does not appear that plaster was ever actually applied, as an inspection behind the sheathing on the north wall produced no sign of plaster. The bevel-edged sheathing appears to be the only finish ever applied to the counting room walls.⁷

Both the retail room and the counting room were at one time shelved to display goods and for storage, and ghosts for the shelving can still be seen on the sheathing of the east, west, and north walls; the interior sheathing on the south wall has been removed. The ghosts on the west wall, opposite the main entrance, are likely from the original shelving, as this is where the retail counter would have stood with display shelving behind. Two of the shelves, located approximately 33 inches and 60 inches above the floor, were supported with either ogee brackets or a straight stanchion two-nailed to the wall sheathing from both sides. The west wall shelving continues into the counting room, where it is likely a later extension of the original retail room shelving; there is a ghost of a shelf edge on the counting room door, indicating that the shelf was installed after the door was secured shut. This ghost shows a shelf of approximately 18 inches deep, which may have also been the depth of the retail room shelving. The shelving on the east wall of the store also seems to be a later addition, which is in keeping with the main entrance being on the east wall, and therefore the unshelved public area of the retail room.⁸

Although the flooring on the ground floor of the store was replaced in the twentieth century, the attic flooring is original. It was gauged and undercut above the counting room, and planed smooth on its lower face above the retail room. Gauged and undercut floors are far more typical in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but by 1820 flooring of consistent thickness had become more common. Still, it is not unheard of for a pre-1820 building to have flooring that was not undercut when the lower face of that flooring was intended to be exposed rather than plastered. In other similar examples of exposed joist ceilings, the underside of the flooring was often planed as in the Thomas James Store to give the boards an even thickness and a more decorative appearance.⁹

c.1840 Store (contributing, counted as part of Sibley's)

Exterior

The c.1840 store connected to the rear of Sibley's is also rectangular in shape, with an area of approximately 750 square feet. It is somewhat mysterious architecturally, as only one original door and no original windows remain on the ground floor. It appears as though at least one of the walls of the building has been completely replaced, and any original openings that may have existed on the other walls were covered on the exterior with weatherboard or altered into more modern doorways. Any interior wall finishing that may have existed at one time has also been removed. There is evidence that the building originally had an interior wall that divided it into two rooms, suggesting that it was used as a store at one time rather than an outbuilding of some sort. However, no historic evidence has yet been found to support this theory. It is possible that this building, like the Old Thomas James Store, was moved at one time from its original location.

The building is constructed with combination timber framing with continuous sills. The framing lumber is both hewn square and pit sawn, with the sills, corner posts, and ceiling joists being mainly hewn square, and the wall studs being mainly pit sawn. The wall joints are nailed with flat-headed machine-cut nails. The foundation of the store is composed of brick piers with concrete block infill. The exterior cladding is white-painted mill sawn weatherboard siding with cornerboards. The gable of the asphalt shingle roof is side-oriented with the current position of the building; however, it is unclear which façade of the store was originally the front.

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The current west façade of the building faces the rear of Sibley's, to which it is connected by a one-story hyphen that spans the full width of the c.1840 store. There are no windows on this wall, and a single wide doorway that leads into the hyphen. This doorway is likely not original; it may have been cut into the wall when the older store was attached to Sibley's. The wood frame of the west wall looks much more modern than that of the south wall next to it, leading to the speculation that the entire wall was replaced at some time.

On the first floor of the south façade of the c.1840 store is an original double door with a center stud frame and a wooden crossbar with interior padlock. It is covered on the exterior by a plywood board, and has been reinforced on the interior with strips of plywood. At the attic level of the south façade is a simple vertical panel wooden door with three horizontal panels at top, center, and bottom for reinforcement. It has an interior crossbar latch, and has large exterior strap hinges.

There is a single modern metal exterior door at the center of the store's east façade, on the ground floor. It is set in a wood doorframe that is wider than the current door. There appears to be a frame for a transom window above the door, which is currently covered with a strip of plywood. The north façade of the c.1840 store has no openings on the ground floor. At the attic level, there is a single small double-hung 4/4 window directly under the gable.

Interior

The c.1840 store is composed of only one ground-floor room and an attic, although it likely originally had two rooms on the first floor. This building is used today only for storage, as it is completely uninsulated and has no heating or cooling system, and therefore cannot currently be employed for retail or display. The staircase to the attic is in the southwest corner of the building; the attic is also one open room, and is currently unused. The walls and ceiling of both the ground floor and the attic are unfinished. Wall studs, corner posts, and weatherboard are exposed on the interior of three of the four walls. On the west wall, the studs are exposed but insulation has been packed between the studs, and the wall has been covered with sheet plastic in an attempt to weatherproof the main building from the uninsulated rear building. It is indeterminate whether the interior walls were ever finished. The original flooring on the ground floor has been removed, and replaced with sheets of unfinished plywood nailed to the floor joists beneath. The attic of the c.1840 store retains its original wide plank flooring.

Sibley's General Store (contributing)

Exterior

Sibley's General Store is the most visible of the three buildings in the district, as it faces west toward Main Street in downtown Mathews. The two-and-a-half story building is rectangular in shape, with a small addition on the north side that houses a staircase to the second floor. Another small one-story addition resides at the rear of the building, connecting Sibley's to an earlier c.1840 building to its east. Each floor of Sibley's measures approximately 1500 square feet in area. The foundation of the building and its rear hyphen consists of brick piers with areas of concrete block infill. The foundation for the concrete block staircase addition on the north façade is constructed entirely of concrete block. The building is clad in mill sawn weatherboard siding with corner boards. The gables on the north, west, and south elevations of the main building have wood shingle decoration in a combination of square and hexagon shapes. Sibley's has a front gable roof, with centered side gables as well on the north and south sides, each with a window into the building's attic. The exterior

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roofing material on the original building is asphalt shingle, and the roofing of the connecting room between Sibley's and the c.1840 store behind it is flat and sheathed in standing-seam tin. The sloped and flat roof of the north staircase addition is also mostly standing-seam tin; the side-gabled peak at the highest point of the addition has an asphalt shingle roof. Sibley's has three associated chimneys, all of machine-cut brick construction. The first is an exterior chimney at the gable peak on the north façade of the building. The concrete block staircase addition was built such that the chimney is now nestled in the corner where the building and the addition meet. The other two chimneys are interior ridgeline chimneys, both positioned on the east-west ridgeline with one on each side of the north-south ridgeline created by the window gables.

The west façade of Sibley's is the front of the building, facing Main Street. This façade is symmetrical, and is dominated by a one-story porch that spans the full width of the building. Its asphalt roof has two front gables, one on each side of the porch entrance. The porch gables have wood shingle decoration to match the gables of the building. The porch has a wide fascia, with plastic letters spelling "Sibley's General Store" above the entrance. The porch is supported on the front by four turned posts; one at each front corner, and one on each side of the entrance. There is a balustrade around the porch with square wood balusters and matching handrails on either side of the entrance stairway; this balustrade is not original and was a very recent addition, c.2006. The wood plank floor and two-step stairway of the porch are also not original, having been replaced in 2006. The ground floor of the west façade has protruding glass display windows on each side of the recessed front door. Each display consists of a thin rectangular window on the inside edge of the display to protrude it from the level of the door, a large square display window facing Main Street, and a rectangular four-pane transom window over the display window. Inside of each display case is an interior 2/2 window opening into the main store area. There is also a transom window over the front door, which was replaced in 2006 with a locally-made stained glass window reading "Sibley's General Store." The front entrance doorway is 48 inches wide and fits the original double unpainted wooden doors with glass panes. On the second floor of the west façade are two evenly-spaced sets of paired double-hung 1/1 windows. At the attic level is a set of paired 2/2 windows, which are covered by a set of window shutters. On the left side of the west façade is the front of the exterior concrete block staircase addition, with an entrance consisting of a plain unpainted wood door with a full glass pane, capped with a rectangular transom window.

The south elevation of Sibley's has two 2/2 windows on the ground floor, both of which have been boarded up on the outside of the building, as they look directly out onto the wall of the building to the south. There is a single-leaf door on the south elevation, near the rear of the building, which is also covered on the exterior with a plywood board. The hyphen that connects Sibley's to the c.1840 store has a single large double-hung 9/9 window, also boarded on the outside. The second floor of the south façade has three 2/2 windows, as well as a set of paired 1/1 windows directly under the side gable. At the attic level is a single 2/2 unshuttered window.

The east, or rear, elevation of the building has no window openings on the ground floor; this is where Sibley's is connected to the c.1840 store via a hyphen. There is an original door leading from the rear of Sibley's into the hyphen; this is a white double-leaf wooden door that is very similar in style to the building's front door, but has smaller six-pane windows. The second floor has two 2/2 windows and one small square four-pane fixed window. At the attic level is a single 2/2 window.

The north elevation is dominated by a two-story concrete block exterior staircase addition, which covers approximately half of the north wall. This addition was added sometime in the middle of the twentieth century to create an entrance to

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N/A

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the building's second floor that was separate from the interior of the store; the interior staircase leading up from the retail room was removed when the exterior addition was built. There are two 2/2 windows on the ground floor of the north elevation, one of which is contained inside the small utility room created by the exterior staircase addition. The other is shuttered on the outside of the building. On the second floor are three 2/2 windows; two to the left of the staircase addition, and one to the right. It appears that there may have originally been an attic level window to match the one on the south façade which was removed when the staircase addition was added. The north exterior chimney rises between one of the second-story windows and the exterior staircase addition; this chimney appears to be a later alteration, as there are no visible access holes to that chimney on the interior of the building. It also rises directly where the north attic window would be, and there is evidence in the attic interior that a north attic window may have existed at one time and been removed. At the top of the enclosed exterior staircase is a single-pane fixed square window that faces east. The north side of the staircase addition also displays a wooden diagonally-paneled double door in a wood and concrete frame. The door has strap hinges and a wood crossbar, as well as two separate locking mechanisms which are now nonworking. On the north elevation of the connecting hyphen is a small square window which is boarded on the outside. There is no evidence of this window from the inside of the room, as wallboard has been installed over it. Originally, all first and second floor 2/2 windows on all four elevations of the building had operable slatted window shutters. These have since been removed on all windows except for the north ground-floor window that is enclosed by the exterior staircase room. The shutters that were removed are all in storage in the attic of the building.

Interior

Due to its original and continued use as a general store, the floor plan for the ground floor of Sibley's is very open, consisting of a single room. This room was originally used as the retail area for the general store, and is now used for the retail and display area for the Mathews County Visitor Center. The original wooden display counters remain in the store, although the wooden wall shelving was removed in 2006. Originally, a staircase to the building's second floor was located near the southeast corner of the room. However, this staircase was removed when the exterior staircase was built on the north side of the building. Following the main room to the rear, the back door opens into the connecting hyphen that joins Sibley's with the earlier c.1840 building. The hyphen is long and narrow, measuring approximately 23 feet long by 6 feet wide, and has been divided into two rooms. Both rooms are currently used for storage.

The walls and ceiling on the ground floor of the main retail room are both clad in painted wood paneling in 1½ to 3-inch widths. The ceiling panels are laid diagonally, and are divided in sections by lengths of molding running both the length and width of the room. Corner molding separates the ceiling from the walls. In general, the wall panels are laid diagonally at the top three feet of the wall and horizontally on the remainder of the wall, although there is a section on the south wall where the paneling is horizontal from top to bottom. The hyphen at the rear of Sibley's has painted wallboard finishing on three of the walls and on the ceiling. The dividing wall between the two sections of the hyphen is a simple frame wall with a sheet of unfinished and unpainted wallboard nailed to each side. The west wall of the hyphen was originally the weatherboard exterior of the main building, and has not been refinished, retaining the white-painted weatherboard.

The original hardwood flooring on the first floor of Sibley's was removed and replaced in 2006 with new wood plank flooring. At this time, many of the deteriorated wooden floor joists were also replaced. In the hyphen addition, part of the flooring was also removed and never replaced. The joists are currently covered with sheets of plywood. The original unfinished oak plank flooring remains on the south side of the hyphen. The doorways and trim on the first floor are very

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simple, square-cut wood with no embellishments. Each window has a square-cut frame to match the doorframes, with a very narrow protruding sill. Six-inch baseboards with a concave molded top edge run around the perimeter of the room. Although the windows retain their original hardware, the doors do not. The doorknobs have been removed on the rear double-leaf door and replaced with sliding latches to keep the door both closed and locked.

The second floor of the building is divided into six rooms. The entrance to the second floor is on the north side of the building, from the later addition of an exterior staircase and landing. The staircase opens into a central hallway running north-south with a room on each side. The wall dividing the hallway from the large front northeast room appears to have been a later addition, as its construction and entrance doorframe do not match the rest of the building. The north hallway veers to the left, running east-west, and opens into the other two north rooms. The southeast room is accessible from either the northeast room or from a second north-south hallway. This hallway also opens to the attic staircase, to a closet where the original staircase rose from the first floor, and to the second south room, which leads into the front southwest room. Five of the six rooms have a closet, and the southeast room has a large built-in glass-front wall cabinet. The staircase to the attic opens into the middle of the attic floor plan, where an entrance area made of wood is built into the floor. The attic plan is completely open and was used for storage in the past, but is rarely accessed today.

All original walls on the second floor are finished with plaster over wood lathing. A majority of the rooms are also finished with wallpaper over the plaster on both walls and ceiling, although the middle north room is simply painted with yellow walls and a white ceiling. The northeast and southeast rooms have original wood wainscoting on all four walls. The only wall that is not plastered is the wall dividing the northwest room from the central hallway; this appears to be a later addition. It is constructed of plywood squares finished with wood molding, and topped with a series of wood-framed transom windows. The walls and ceiling of the exterior stairwell to the second floor are finished with painted plaster over wire lathing. All flooring on the second floor is the original hardwood planks cut in varying widths. In the second floor hallways and two of the south rooms, the floors have been painted a light gray.

The second floor displays much more intricate and ornate wood detailing. All rooms have decorative molded baseboards, and most of the door and window frames are similarly molded, with bullseye blocks at the top corners of the frame. Several of the doorways are topped with framed transom windows. Most of these are fixed, but one of the transoms in the middle north room includes hardware to open and close the window. The door hardware on the second floor varies; some of the doors still have their original metal doorknobs and box lock mechanisms, while others have been replaced with more modern metal knobs on brass plates. The wood trim on the staircase to the attic is particularly decorative, with turned newels and scroll carvings on the exterior face of each step.

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Sibley's and James Store Historic District is a collection of three commercial buildings—two connected at some point, resulting in a contributing building count of two--located on a property that housed these rural country stores for at least 190 years. The evolution of these stores through history can still be seen in the district, representing changes in both local Mathews County commerce and local commercial architectural style. Though each individual building is significant in its own right, their importance becomes magnified when considered together as a district. One can figuratively walk into the past as they walk through the largely unchanged Sibley's General Store, into the c.1840 store at the rear, and finally pass into the c.1810 Old Thomas James Store. The district is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, within the historic context of commerce at the local level. The three stores composing the district played a large role in the economic and social development of Mathews County between the years of c.1810 and 1959. It is also eligible under Criterion C, in that the district is architecturally significant within its local context. The Old Thomas James Store is an excellent and rare example of an early nineteenth-century rural commercial building, and Sibley's General Store is the only example of a turn of the century folk Victorian commercial building in downtown Mathews. As the Old Thomas James Store was most likely moved from its original location, and the c.1840 store may have been moved as well, both during the historic period, the property also meets Criteria Consideration B.

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins in c.1810, with the construction of the first store in this district, the Old Thomas James Store. Because the property was continuously used for commerce, the period of significance lasts through the construction of the second store (c.1840) and Sibley's General Store (1899), and ends in 1959 at the fifty year cut-off date. The property continued to be utilized as a general store and served as a vital central element in the town of Mathews until 2003, remaining in the Sibley family until 1987.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

The Sibley's and James Store Historic District meets Criteria Consideration B, in that the Old Thomas James Store was likely moved from its original location at some point in the nineteenth century. Originally, the James Store likely faced Main Street, and was moved to its current location behind Sibley's General Store and the c.1840 store. Alternatively, it may have faced Main Street, moved back to make room for the ca. 1840 building which may have fronted on Main Street originally, then moved back again to allow the ca. 1840 building to be moved back to make room for the construction of Sibley's. It appears that the Old Thomas James Store was also turned when it was moved, as the current east elevation of the store was almost certainly the original front elevation, and therefore would have faced west onto Main Street. With this original orientation, the south gable door would have opened onto the side street, and could have been used as a loading door for goods.

Although there is no historical documentary evidence to conclusively indicate that the Old Thomas James Store was moved from its original location, the architectural evidence for the move is compelling, as noted by architectural historians Willie Graham and Mark Wenger. The current east façade appears to be the original front elevation for several reasons; first, it is the only elevation of the original store with window openings. Stores from this time period usually limited the number of windows in the retail room to maximize wall space on which to hang shelving, with their only windows being on

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the front elevation, as is the case with the James Store. The widest door opening is located on the east elevation, making it a likely front door. An orientation with the current east wall originally facing Main Street would also be in keeping with the common antebellum practice of building stores with their long wall facing the street in rural areas where lot frontages were often larger and less expensive. Finally, this orientation would explain the current south-facing door; it would originally have faced the side road that is now Maple Avenue, making it useful as a loading door.¹⁰

Assuming that the Old Thomas James Store was relocated at some time after its construction, it is difficult to determine an approximate date for this move. The building's current foundation is fairly early, indicating that the building may have been moved when the antebellum section of Sibley's General Store was constructed in c.1840. The brick foundation is laid in English bond, which was largely out of favor by 1825, making it possible that the store was moved even earlier than the construction of the c.1840 store.¹¹ It also cannot be ruled out that the building was moved more than once.

The c.1840 store may have been moved as well, as at least one of the walls has been replaced. However, it is unclear at this time whether or not the building was actually relocated.

Although one, and possibly two, of the originally three buildings in the district were relocated, the district is eligible for the National Register because the moves occurred during the period of significance and on a single piece of property operated as a single commercial enterprise until the early twentieth-first century. The moving of the buildings and the connection of two of them are an integral part of the story of the district, demonstrating the growing fortunes of the owners and the changing tastes in architectural styles in the community. Just as the Old Thomas James Store was individually listed on the National Register, despite being moved at least once, because it is a rare surviving example of an early nineteenth century store, the district as a whole is a rare example of the evolution of a single commercial enterprise, with buildings moved, turned, expanded, and connected on-site to accommodate the changing needs and expectations of the business. Rather than affecting the overall integrity of the district, the relocations enhance the story the district tells.

Narrative Statement of Significance (provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance)

Local Context

Mathews County is located at the eastern tip of the Middle Peninsula of Virginia. It is bounded on the north by the Piankitank River and the Chesapeake Bay, on the east by the Chesapeake Bay, and on the south by Mobjack Bay. Mathews is a rural county of 87 square miles, with a population of approximately 9,500, and is the smallest rural county in the state.¹² The county seat and center of commerce in Mathews County is the village known as Mathews, or Mathews Court House. It is located in the center of the county at the intersection of Rt. 14 and Rt. 198, at the head of Put-In Creek. This downtown commercial area covers only a few blocks, with most buildings located on Main Street (Rt. 14) and a few on the intersecting Church Street. At the center of the downtown area is the Courthouse Green, which houses several county buildings including the historic courthouse.

Mathews County was originally known as Kingston Parish, and was the eastern part of Gloucester County. Kingston Parish was prosperous, and in 1704, 116 landowners were recorded with total landholdings of 46,537 acres.¹³ In 1790, Kingston Parish citizens petitioned the General Assembly to separate them from Gloucester, arguing that the size of the county made it difficult for residents of the lower section to travel the forty miles to Gloucester Court House. Speaker of

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the House of Delegates General Thomas Mathews supported the petition, and the county was divided on May 1, 1791. In gratitude for General Mathews' interest in their cause, the citizens named their new county Mathews.¹⁴

In 1792, construction began on the first of the brick county buildings located on the courthouse green at the head of Put-In Creek. By the mid-nineteenth century, several more county buildings had been erected on the green, including two jails and a clerk's office. The area surrounding the courthouse became the central marketplace of the county, and was originally known as Westville. In A New and Comprehensive Gazetteer of Virginia and the District of Columbia, published in 1835, Joseph Martin states that there were "about 30 houses, 4 mercantile stores, 1 tanyard, 3 boot and shoe factories, 1 tailor, 2 blacksmiths, 1 saddler, 1 carriage maker, and 1 tavern...population 150, including 3 regular physicians."¹⁵ Westville gradually evolved into the Mathews commercial district that exists today.

The economy of Mathews County has always been closely tied to the sea, with commercial fishing and shipbuilding historically being two of its largest industries. Shipbuilding was the main trade in the county from as early as the American Revolution, with timber being harvested from across the county. One-third of the ships constructed in Virginia between 1790 and 1820 were built in Mathews; by the mid-nineteenth century, the shipbuilding industry in the county had declined as sea vessel industry sprang up in the Norfolk and Baltimore areas. During the 1800s and first half of the 1900s, Mathews was a steamboat port for boats carrying both passengers and cargo. Fishing industries have also long been an important trade, with crabbing, oystering, and fishing being the main source of income for many Mathews families. The seafood industry peaked around 1920 and then declined due to a lessened market and general resource depletion in the Bay.¹⁶ This lack of sustaining industry resulted in little population growth within the county since the mid-nineteenth century and slow commercial growth in the downtown commercial district, which has been beneficial in preserving the rural historic character of the village.

Historical Background

The significance of the Sibley's and James Store Historic District begins with the construction of the Old Thomas James Store in c.1810. Due to sparse historic records regarding the store or its owner, Thomas James, our knowledge of the store itself is very limited. However, we can look at the role that other southern country stores played in local economic and social history to gain a better understanding of the James Store. By the time the Thomas James Store was built, the architectural style of the southern rural store had been established as a vital part of local communities across the south. Colonial stores were operating as early as the mid-eighteenth century, once the demand for local goods began to grow with increased settlement. By the end of the eighteenth century, these country stores had become one of the most common non-domestic buildings in Virginia. They were used as a place for the purchase and trade of crops and other goods. In addition to foodstuffs, stores often also sold tools and other necessary provisions, as well as excess goods produced by the plantation's slave artisans. The storehouses often imported and exported goods, selling imports to local residents and storing materials awaiting export; in Mathews, the major exported goods were likely food crops, tobacco, and cotton. Southern stores like the Old Thomas James Store were the center of economic and social activity in the community, linking residents to one another and to the outside world through the importing and exporting of goods.¹⁷

Small southern stores are also significant for the role that the storekeeper generally played in the community. He collected crops from small farmers and arranged for their sale in his store, or for their export. He acted as a banker for farmers, allowing them to purchase goods from the store with credit against their future crop sales. Because storekeepers

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were such important and well-known figures in their communities, they often held other prominent offices, such as Justice of the Peace as in the case of Thomas James. Storekeepers also often held the office of postmaster, allowing them to easily send and receive correspondence, and to attract trade.¹⁸ As postmasters would have access to newspapers and magazines, the storekeeper was often more linked with events outside of the community than the average resident.

Thomas James, owner of the Old Thomas James Store, was born on February 24, 1777 in Kingston Parish of Gloucester County to Matthias James and Elizabeth Davis.¹⁹ He was married in c.1815 to Frances Lewis, and had three sons and three daughters. James was a merchant, with retail licenses recorded in the Mathews Land Tax Records between 1815 and 1820.²⁰ It is likely that he continued to hold a license after 1820, but that was the last year that retail licenses were recorded in the local land tax records. In the census of 1820, Thomas James was listed as the head of a household that included five children under the age of 10, one child under the age of 16, and one female and one male aged 26 to 45. Two of these household members were stated as engaged in commerce.²¹ James was a prominent citizen of Mathews County; he was also a postmaster at Mathews Court House in 1810²² and a recorded Justice of the Peace from 1819 to 1821, as well as in 1824.²³

Thomas James first appears in the Mathews County Land Tax Records in 1807, owning 76 acres of land in an unlisted location. These 76 acres were later listed in the 1814 Land Tax Records as being located in "Milford Haven," which also listed another 16 acres of land at "Pudding Creek." In 1815, James purchased 54 acres of land in Mathews Court House from John Patterson. This purchase included the property upon which the Old Thomas James Store stands. By 1819, the buildings standing on these 54 acres were valued at \$630.²⁴ Although it is likely that the Old Thomas James Store had been constructed by 1819, it is impossible to tell from the Land Tax Records which building values signify the James Store. Thomas James's family home was probably also located on this property in the Court House, with the store being one of several outbuildings.

Over the next 25 years, Thomas James's landholdings in Mathews Court House gradually rose; in 1820, he owned 74 acres, in 1824 he added an additional 18 acre property in the Court House, and by 1840 his Mathews Court House holdings totaled 129 ¾ acres. The building value on the James Store Court House property fluctuated as well, presumably as new structures were built and older ones destroyed or moved, and by 1845 James owned \$2000 in buildings on the property. Among these buildings was likely the c.1840 store that is now located between the Old Thomas James Store and Sibley's General Store. However, it is unclear whether the James Store and the c.1840 store were used concurrently as storehouses, or if the newer store replaced the James Store. In addition to the Court House property upon which the James Store was situated, Thomas James owned other properties in the county as well; between 1819 and 1827, James acquired land in Reade Swamp, Milford Haven, East River, Bandy Ridge, Pudding Creek, and Mathews Court House. By the time the James Store lot was sold in 1846, Thomas James owned approximately 317 acres of land, with buildings valued at \$2,150.²⁵ It is apparent that James was wealthy enough to be able to gradually increase his landholdings, and to build and pay taxes on these highly valued buildings. In addition to land and buildings, Thomas James owned a large number of slaves, particularly considering his comparatively small landholdings. In the 1820 census, James was listed as owning ten slaves; by 1830 he owned fifteen slaves, and by 1840 he was listed with sixteen slaves. Since James's landholdings were too small to be involved in large-scale agriculture, his profession in commerce must have proven a lucrative one. By 1840, the census lists six members of the James family occupied in agriculture, and none in commerce.²⁶ It is possible that upon retirement from commerce, James used his accrued lands to pursue agriculture for the remainder of his life.

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In 1846, John Dixon Jarvis and Elijah Barnum purchased the one-acre property fronting Main Street that contained the Old Thomas James Store and other buildings, together valued at \$350. By 1859, the building value on the land had diminished to \$300, and then rose again to \$400 in 1872 as improvements were made to the property.²⁷ It is unknown whether the Old Thomas James Store was still being operated as a retail store at this time, but records show that the land was still used commercially. Elijah Barnum was listed as a merchant in the 1850 census²⁸, and the property was recorded as "Store Lot" in the Land Tax Records in 1859. The James Store itself may have still been used as a retail establishment, or it may have been utilized as a storage building for the newer c.1840 store.

By 1869, the property was solely owned by Elijah Barnum, and remained in the possession of him and his family until 1893, when it was purchased by William Northam Trader and John W. Dixon, Jr.²⁹ At this time, the property became dubbed the "Barnum Store House Lot" in the Mathews Land Tax Records. It appears that the land was still being used commercially, as Trader and Dixon were involved in a mercantile partnership. In 1899, a lawsuit over the partnership resulted in a settlement that transferred full ownership of the property containing the James Store to William Northam Trader.³⁰ By 1898, the property had diminished to ½ acre of land with buildings valued at \$250.³¹

In May of 1899, Trader sold the ½ acre containing the James Store and the c.1840 store to brothers Henry Sibley and Francis Joseph Sibley, grandsons of Thomas James.³² Henry and F. Joseph had already established their retail business, Sibley Bros. General Store, by the time they purchased the property. It is unknown whether they operated their store elsewhere in Mathews prior to 1899, or whether they rented one of the buildings on the property from William Northam Trader. What is certain is that by 1900, the Sibley brothers had constructed a new 2 ½ story building fronting Main Street from which to operate their business, and the building value on the property rose to \$1100.³³ By this time, The Old Thomas James Store and the c.1840 store were almost certainly used as storehouses rather than retail locations.

Henry Sibley was born in Mathews County to Robert L. Sibley and Mary Frances James, the daughter of Thomas James, in 1864. He was married to Helen Augusta Miller in 1895, and had two children. Francis Joseph Sibley, also the son of Robert L. Sibley and Mary Frances James, was born in Mathews County in 1866. He married Ellen Byrd Miller in 1900, and had five children.³⁴ Little is known about the brothers prior to their ownership of the general store, but it is likely that they were already merchants. Henry Sibley was the postmaster in Mathews Court House from May 1893 – May 1897³⁵, a position that was usually held by a merchant or shopkeeper. When Henry Sibley became the shopkeeper at Sibley's, the Mathews Post Office was moved to Sibley's.³⁶ Sibley's General Store was locally famous for its wide variety of stock, most of which was received in the early days from Baltimore at Williams Wharf, a steamship stop on the East River.³⁷ On the first day of business recorded in the ledger book, sales totaled \$46.59, with the most commonly purchased items being whiskey and cotton gingham.³⁸ The store sold odds and ends, such as nails, tobacco, and lighting fixtures, as well as foods such as salt fish, bologna, and cheese cut to order. The Sibley brothers generated the logo "If we don't have it, you don't need it," which was printed on a sign above the counter. Local lore has it that if the Sibley brothers did not carry what a customer was looking for, they would always try to find a suitable replacement. According to one such story, a customer asked Henry Sibley if he carried toilet paper when it first became available in the area. Sibley replied, "I don't have toilet paper, but I can give you some mighty fine sandpaper." The store was not simply a retail location; it was also a gathering place for local residents, who would sit around the pot-bellied woodstove to eat and discuss county business.³⁹

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The second floor of Sibley's apparently had various uses over the years, although for the most part it is unknown what these uses were. An advertisement in the local newspaper from 1906 indicates that Dr. M.S. Foster, a dentist, held his office over the general store.⁴⁰ It is unknown how long Dr. Foster operated his business in the building. It is likely that the second floor was rented out as individual offices throughout most of the twentieth century, and by the 1980s was used only for storage. Henry Sibley passed away in 1937, and his interest in the store was passed to his wife, Helen.⁴¹ Francis Joseph Sibley continued to run the store himself until his son, Cecil Sibley, took over the store in 1945 upon his discharge from the U.S. Army. F. Joseph and his wife Ellen transferred their one-half interest in the property and business to Cecil via a gift deed in 1945.⁴² F. Joseph Sibley died the following year, and in 1948 Cecil Sibley and Helen Miller Sibley, Henry Sibley's widow, partitioned the land that they each owned half-interest in, with Cecil Sibley retaining the 0.155 acres of land that contained the general store and its two outbuildings.⁴³ Cecil Sibley continued to operate Sibley's General Store in the same fashion as his father and uncle until his death on October 29, 1987. He continued to use his father's roll-top desk to keep the store ledger, and continued to collect money in the original cash register, which is still in the building. He tallied purchase totals in pencil on a brown paper bag.⁴⁴ Upon Cecil's death, the general store closed and was transferred to his wife, Mary C. Sibley.⁴⁵ The business closed while she looked for a new owner who would continue to operate the building as a general store. She found what she was looking for in Jerry Fruehbrodt and his wife Carol, who purchased the building and its contents on March 14, 1989.⁴⁶ They reopened the store immediately, retaining the Sibley's name and making very few changes to the store or its merchandise.

The Fruehbrodts ran Sibley's until November 2003, when they auctioned off the contents and closed the store.⁴⁷ This marked the end of the Sibley's General Store era, as the last remaining operating general store in Mathews closed its doors. On November 18, 2003, the property was sold to Michael J. Brown, a local real estate agent, and his wife Lisa A. Brown.⁴⁸ The building was leased for use as an antiques store for several years before being leased to the Mathews County Visitor and Information Center. In October 2008, the Mathews County Visitor and Information Center purchased the property, and has future plans to preserve the building and rehabilitate the second floor so that it is once again usable.⁴⁹

The Sibley's and James Store Historic District is significant locally to the economic and social development of Mathews County. From the time of the James Store's construction in c.1810, the property has been associated with local commerce. With the construction of the newer c.1840 store, and later Sibley's General Store in 1899, the new buildings continued the tradition of the property as an economic and social center for the town. Not only were these stores where many of the Mathews County locals shopped for nearly 200 years, but they also served the town as post offices. The country general store was a link between the rural and relatively isolated county of Mathews and the rest of the world, serving to connect the economy of Mathews with that of other regions and states by importing and selling goods not readily available locally. Although there are a number of surviving former older general stores in Virginia, most dating post-1860 and the majority post-1900, the Sibley's and James Store Historic District is remarkable in that the property continued to operate commercially from the time of the James Store's construction in c.1810 until 2003, when country general stores had largely become a thing of the past. Sibley's outlived all other general stores in the region, and was one of only a few of its kind still operating in the state of Virginia at the time of its closing, while others sat vacant or had been converted to other uses.

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Architecture

Architecturally, the Sibley's and James Store Historic District is significant for the local rarity of the various types of architecture represented in the district. The Old Thomas James Store is significant as it is a rare surviving antebellum commercial buildings in Virginia and the South. It follows the general floor plan of most stores from its time period,⁵⁰ having only two rooms on the ground floor: a larger retail room and a smaller counting room. As in the James Store, the basic store plan would have a main entrance into the retail room, as well as a back door leading from the counting room. The James Store has a third exterior door, which is interesting as a testament to the rising popularity of a loading door in the early to mid-nineteenth century. On the traditional store, windows were generally located only on the front wall of the building to maximize wall space for shelving, and there was a counter in the sales room to separate the customers from the goods on the shelves. There also would generally be a fireplace in the counting room to provide warmth for the storekeeper; although the chimney and fireplace no longer remain in the James Store, evidence shows that a chimney did originally exist. There was usually living space for the storekeeper on the second floor of the store, which could be reached by a staircase that rose from the counting room. The James Store is unusual in that the second floor appears to have been used for storage only rather than a living area.

The c.1840 store is very similar in design to the Old Thomas James Store; it also appears to have consisted of two large rooms, with one likely being a retail room and the other a counting room. A staircase rose from the corner of the counting room to an attic that, as in the James Store, was likely used for storage rather than living quarters. Although it has been altered enough that it is difficult to determine where the original windows and doors were located, the general structure of the building reflects that of a mid-nineteenth century county storehouse, a rare find in the region.

Sibley's General Store is largely unaltered example of folk Victorian architecture. The building represents a style that may have been more prevalent in Mathews at the dawn of the twentieth century, but is rare now as other examples have been destroyed. Sibley's is the only remaining folk Victorian commercial structure in the Mathews Court House commercial area, and is one of only a few known structures of this style in the county. This ensemble of c. 1810, c. 1840, and c. 1899 store buildings, showing the evolution of commercial architectural form, space, and design on one parcel is unique or rare in Virginia, and as it exists presents great opportunities for research and interpretation.

Endnotes

¹ Willie Graham, "Sibley Store, Mathews Courthouse, Virginia, ca. 1810-20," Report, 3 March 2006, pp.3-5.

² Mark Wenger, "Thomas James Store: Mathews (sic), Virginia," Report, 27 November 2008, p.7.

³ Wenger, p.5.

⁴ Wenger, p.2.

⁵ Wenger, pp.5-7.

⁶ Graham, p.2.

⁷ Wenger, pp.2-3.

⁸ Wenger, pp.4-5.

⁹ Graham, p.4.

¹⁰ Graham, pp.2-3.

¹¹ Graham, p.5.

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¹³ Polly Cary Mason, "Records of Colonial Gloucester County Virginia," Volume I, pp.84-85.

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¹⁵ Joseph Martin, ed., "A New and Comprehensive Gazetteer of Virginia and the District of Columbia" (Westminster, MD: Willow Bend Books, 2000), p. 228-229.

¹⁶ Mathews County Visitor and Information Center.

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²¹ Stephen E. Bradley, Jr., "Mathews County Virginia, Censuses 1810, 1820, 1830, 1840" (Self-published, 1992), p. 15-16, 45, 58.

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²⁴ Mathews County Land Tax Records, 1807-1819, Mathews County Courthouse, Mathews, VA.

²⁵ Mathews County Land Tax Records, 1820-1846, Mathews County Courthouse, Mathews, VA.

²⁶ Bradley, 15-16, 45, 58.

²⁷ Mathews County Land Tax Records, 1846-1872, Mathews County Courthouse, Mathews, VA.

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²⁹ Deed of sale from Commissioners of the Circuit Court to William N. Trader and John W. Dixon, Jr., 1893, Deed Book 10, page 403, Mathews County Clerk's Office, Mathews, VA.

³⁰ Deed of sale from John W. Dixon, Jr. to William N. Trader, 1899, Deed Book 12, page 193, Mathews County Clerk's Office, Mathews, VA.

³¹ Mathews County Land Tax Records, 1898, Mathews County Courthouse, Mathews, VA.

³² Deed of sale from William Trader to Henry and F. Joseph Sibley, 1899, Deed Book 12, page 231, Mathews County Clerk's Office, Mathews, VA.

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³⁴ Becky Foster Barnhardt, "Sibley's Store Research," June 2006, 4-5.

³⁵ Ibid.

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³⁷ Mary Montague Sikes, "Keeping Tradition Alive," Daily Press, November 12, 1998.

³⁸ Charlotte Lanford, "The Old Country Store Lives On," Gloucester-Mathews Gazette-Journal, September 28, 1972.

³⁹ Brooks, 26.

⁴⁰ Advertisement, "Dr. M.S. Foster, Dentist," The Mathews Journal, May 31, 1906.

⁴¹ Will of Henry Sibley, 1937, Will Book 3, page 58, Mathews County Clerk's Office, Mathews, VA.

⁴² Deed of sale from F. Joseph Sibley to Cecil Sibley, 1945, Deed Book 40, page 361, Mathews County Clerk's Office, Mathews, VA.

⁴³ Deed of sale from Helen Miller Sibley to Cecil Sibley, 1948, Deed Book 43, page 288, Mathews County Clerk's Office, Mathews, VA.

⁴⁴ Lanford, 9-A.

⁴⁵ Will of Cecil Sibley, 1987, Will Book 17, page 537, Mathews County Clerk's Office, Mathews, VA.

⁴⁶ Deed of sale from Mary Sibley to Jerry Fruehbrodt, 1989, Deed Book 148, page 812, Mathews County Clerk's Office, Mathews, VA.

⁴⁷ Sherry Hamilton, "Sibley's Store to Close," Gloucester-Mathews Gazette-Journal, October 2003.

⁴⁸ Deed of sale from Jerry Fruehbrodt to Michael J. Brown, 2003, Deed Book 295, page 299, Mathews County Clerk's Office, Mathews, VA.

⁴⁹ Rebecca Grow, interview by author, Mathews, VA, October 10, 2008.

⁵⁰ Lounsbury, 355-356.

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Sibley's and James Store Historic District

Mathews County, Virginia

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Sibley's and James Store Historic District

Mathews County, Virginia

N/A

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Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The legal boundaries of the Sibley's and James Store Historic District are as follows, from "Deed of sale from Jerry Fruehbrodt to Michael J. Brown," Deed Book 295, page 299, Mathews County Courthouse:

"All that certain parcel of land, together with all improvements thereon and all appurtenances thereunto belonging, lying in the Westville Magisterial District of Mathews County, Virginia, containing 0.1268 of an acre more or less, and bounded as follows: On the North by a private road known as Maple Avenue; on the East by the land now or formerly of the County of Mathews; on the South by the land now or formerly of the County of Mathews and the land now or formerly of Thomas Witt Hix, Trustee; and on the West by State Highway Route No. 14; and being more fully and accurately described on a plat of survey made by Wayne E. Lewis (of Keller, Lewis and Associates, P.C.), Land Surveyor, dated March 10, 1989, and recorded in the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Mathews County, Virginia, in Plat Book 17, page 73."

A copy of the 1989 plat showing these boundaries is attached.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

These are the legal boundaries of the 0.1268 acre property containing the three buildings within the Sibley's and James Store Historic District, as deeded from Jerry Fruehbrodt to Michael J. Brown on November 18, 2003.

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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Sibley's and James Store Historic District

Mathews County, Virginia

N/A

Section number Photos/Additional Documentation Page 20

The following is the same for all photographs:

Sibley's and James Store Historic District

Mathews County, Virginia

VDHR# 057-5049

Digital Images are stored on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia

View: Sibley's, Exterior West Elevation

Photo taken by Laurie Whiteway

October 2008

Photo: 1 of 14

View: c.1840 Store, Exterior Northeast Corner

Photo taken by Laurie Whiteway

July 2009

Photo: 2 of 14

View: James Store, Exterior Southeast Corner

Photo taken by Jennifer Glass

November 2008

Photo: 3 of 14

View: Sibley's and James Store District across Maple Street from the Northeast

Photo taken by Laurie Whiteway

July 2009

Photo: 4 of 14

View: Detail, Decorative Shingles on Sibley's

Front Porch

Photo taken by Laurie Whiteway

October 2008

Photo: 5 of 14

View: Sibley's First Floor Interior, Looking Toward Southwest Corner

Photo taken by Laurie Whiteway

October 2008

Photo: 6 of 14

View: Detail, Sibley's First Floor Interior Wall Covering, Northeast Corner

Photo taken by Laurie Whiteway

October 2008

Photo: 7 of 14

View: Sibley's Second Floor Interior, Southeast room, Facing Northwest.

Photo taken by Laurie Whiteway

October 2008

Photo: 8 of 14

View: Sibley's Second Floor Interior Hallway and Attic Staircase, Facing North.

Photo taken by Laurie Whiteway

October 2008

Photo: 9 of 14

View: c.1840 Store Interior, Southwest Corner

Photo taken by Laurie Whiteway

October 2008

Photo: 10 of 14

View: Detail, c.1840 Store Top Plate and Studs

Photo taken by Laurie Whiteway

October 2008

Photo: 11 of 14

View: c.1840 Store Attic Interior, South Wall with Door

Photo taken by Laurie Whiteway

October 2008

Photo: 12 of 14

View: James Store Interior, East Wall and Original Entrance Door

Photo taken by Jennifer Glass

November 2008

Photo 13 of 14

View: Detail, James Store Exterior View of Window, Shutter, and Cross Bar on East Wall

Photo taken by Jennifer Glass

November 2008

Photo: 14 of 14

Additional Documentation

Figure 1. Copy of 1989 plat dated March 2003.

Figure 2. Sketch map of contributing resources and photo key.

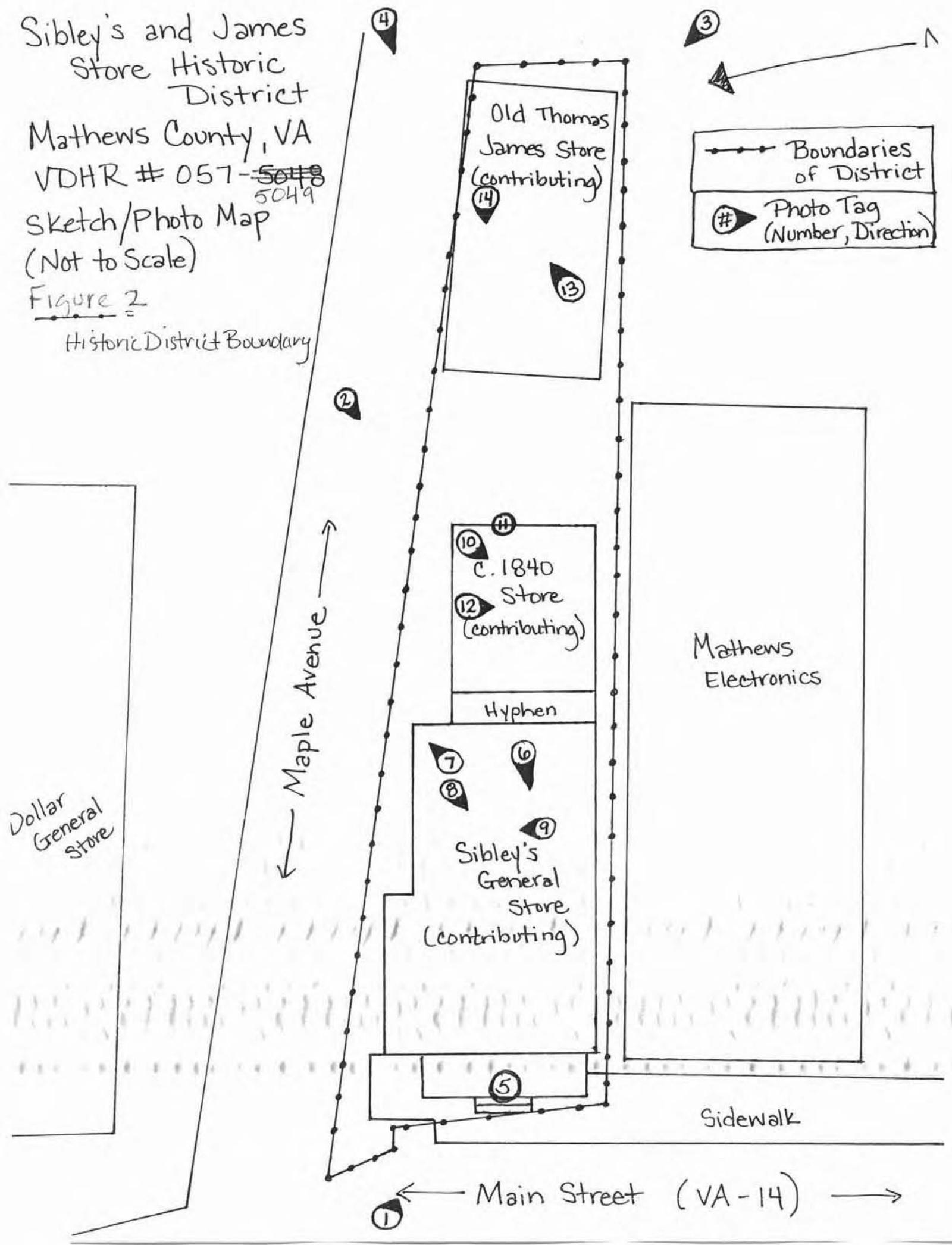
Sibley's and James
Store Historic
District

Mathews County, VA
VDHR # 057-~~5048~~
5049

Sketch/Photo Map
(Not to Scale)

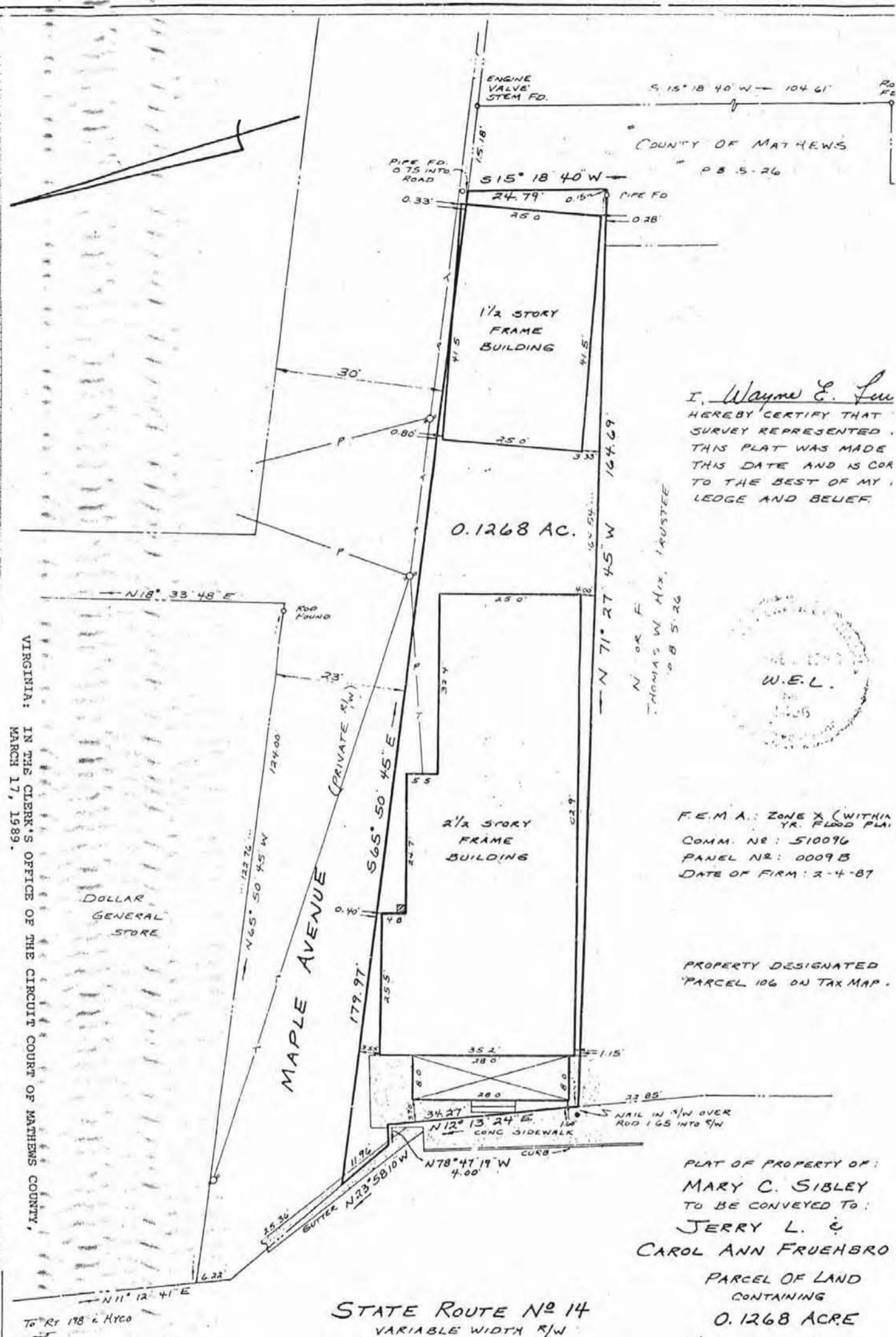
Figure 2

Historic District Boundary



Mathews County, VA
VDHR# 057-~~504~~35049

Figure 1



KELLER, LEWIS AND ASSOCIATES, P.C.
LAND SURVEYORS AND PLANNERS
RT. 1 BOX 1690-4A
HAYES VA 23073 TELE 642-3739

STATE ROUTE N^o 14
VARIABLE WIDTH R/W

6185 · 68-86-7

SCALE: 1" = 15' DATE: 3-

VIRGINIA
W.B. 17 PG 537

WESTVILLE DISTRICT
MATHews COUNTY

VIRGINIA

W.B. 17 PG 537

LE: 1"•15 DATE: 3

This plat attached to and made part of a DEED from MARY C. SIBLEY to JERRY L. FRUEHBRODT and CAROL ANN FRUEHBRODT, recorded March 17, 1989 at 3:35 o'clock p.m. in Deed Book #148, Page 812.



Sibley's ar
James St
Historic I
"30" Mathews Co
✓ Virgin
VDHR #057.
Mathews QU:
JTM Zone 18
383163 i
414378 c