

VLR-7/15/86 NRHP-12/11/86

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only received date entered

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Blenheim (DHL File No. 72-3) and/or common same

2. Location

street & number 6177 Blenheim Road (Route 606) city, town Ballsville state Virginia 23139 code 51 county Powhatan code 145

3. Classification

Table with 4 columns: Category, Ownership, Status, Present Use. Includes options like building(s), private, occupied, agriculture, etc.

4. Owner of Property

name Miss N.T. Blanton and Mrs. R.E.D. Blanton c/o Mrs. Edna Blanton Smith street & number 6177 Blenheim Road city, town Powhatan state Virginia 23139

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Powhatan County Courthouse street & number NA city, town Powhatan state Virginia 23024

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

(1) title HABSI has this property been determined eligible? yes no date 1958 federal state county local depositary for survey records Library of Congress city, town Washington state DC

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____ N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The Blenheim estate is sited on the east side of Deep Creek half-way between ¹⁴Route 60 and ¹³Route 13 and west of ⁶³⁰Route 630 in western Powhatan County. Of frame construction, the one and one-half story vernacular dwelling is in the form of a U, each leg of which consists of a wing from one of the three initial construction periods. Structural evidence suggests that the earliest section of the house dates to the pre-1800 period, however, subsequent construction has left only vestiges of the 18th-century fabric. The two 19th-century wings, dating to 1803-06 and the mid-1830s, form the remaining legs of the U-shape. All three wings harmonize in scale, mass, materials, and stylistic details. Three minor 20th-century additions have also been constructed. The original mid-section has a hall and parlor plan, while the two 19th-century wings each have single pile plans.

Included in the nomination as contributing structures are the main house and smoke house.

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Blenheim Today

As it exists today, the Blenheim house is a simple vernacular one and one-half story frame dwelling. Its general form is of a U with the open or top end oriented toward the west. The overall impression of the house is of a low, horizontal structure of balanced window and dormer placement with a roof punctured by four chimney stacks. It is obvious that conscious attempts were made to regularize and balance the facades of the house through the early construction periods.

There is evidence to suggest that the earliest section of Blenheim, the bottom of the U, was constructed prior to 1800. This evidence consists of portions of the foundation walls, a chimney, and floor framing members as well as architectural features such as the scale and proportion of window openings, and several 18th-century doors. However, the house was so extensively reworked during the two early 19th-century building campaigns that only fragments of the 18th-century structure remain. The two 19th-century wings date to 1803-06 and ca. 1835. There are also three minor mid-20th century additions.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
<hr/>				
	ca. 1750-1799			
Specific dates	1803-06, ca. 1835	Builder/Architect	Unknown	

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Blenheim is significant as one of the earliest extant dwellings in Powhatan County. Sited on land patented in 1730 by the prominent 18th-century Virginia surveyor, Major William Mayo, Blenheim portrays the development of a vernacular cottage constructed by Mayo's son and enlarged by his grandson and subsequent owners into a principal family seat. Vestiges of the 18th-century construction and two major early 19th-century additions together comprise its U-shaped form, a rare plan-type in Virginia for the period. Conscious efforts were made to give Blenheim a general air of classical symmetry and uniformity through scale, massing, and fenestration. The sophisticated Greek Revival interior is a particularly stylish treatment for its time and locale.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Blenheim estate is part of a 9,350-acre tract patented on September 28, 1730 by Major William Mayo of Goochland County, under a grant from King George II of England. This tract extended from the southern shore of the James River to the Appomattox River and from Upper Manakin Creek through Deep Creek. The western 1400 acres, including Blenheim, but then known as Indian Camp, contained the richest farm land, and was the portion Mayo retained through his numerous land dealings.

William Mayo has been called the most accomplished and well-known surveyor of early Virginia. He was born in England in 1684, and emigrated to Barbados as a young man. There he established his reputation as a surveyor, preparing a highly lauded map of this important English trade island. In 1723, he came to Henrico County with his brother Joseph and first cousin William Cabell I. Under the patronage of William Byrd II, Mayo quickly gained prominence in the colony, and in 1728 was the principal surveyor laying out the Virginia-North Carolina boundary. That same year he was appointed surveyor of the newly formed County of Goochland, and charged with surveying its boundaries with Henrico and Hanover Counties. In 1731, he prepared a general map of the colony under orders from Governor Gooch that included the first accurate depiction of the Shenandoah Valley drainage system. By 1733, he was again surveying for William Byrd II, and in 1738 laid out the City of Richmond on Byrd's holdings there. That same year Mayo prepared much of the detailed information that would later be included in the 1751 Jefferson-Fry Map of Virginia. Mayo was also instrumental in training other noted 18th-century surveyors such as his assistants Peter Jefferson, William Cabell II, and George Carrington.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Ague, Helene Barrett. Facets of Goochland County's History. Richmond: The Dietz Press, Inc., 1962.

Blanton Family Geneology. N.P.

(See Continuation Sheet 13)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approx. 5 acres

Quadrangle name Trenholm, VA

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

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

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification Beginning at a point on the S side of VA 606 approx. 400' WNW of intersection of VA 606 with VA 630; thence extending approx. 600' W; thence approx. 200' SW; thence approx. 50' S; thence approx. 200' SE; thence approx. 100' SSE; thence approx. 250' ESE; thence approx. 200' NE; thence approx. 150' SE; thence approx. 275' NE to point of origin. (See Continuation Sheet 14)

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

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

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Howard J. Kittell, Architectural Historian

organization N.A.

date 25 May 1986

street & number 1317 Oak Tree Lane

telephone (804) 978-2953

city or town Charlottesville

state Virginia 22901

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

H. Bryan Mitchell
H. Bryan Mitchell, Director

title Division of Historic Landmarks

date October 6, 1986

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Blenheim, Powhatan County, Virginia

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet 1

Item number 6

Page 1

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

- (2) Division of Historic Landmarks
1986 State

Division of Historic Landmarks
221 Governor Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Blenheim, Powhatan County, Virginia

Continuation sheet 2

Item number 7

Page 1

7. ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Exterior

Originally, beaded weatherboard covered the house except under the ca. 1835 porches and a portion of the inner court. Recently the house has had aluminum-siding applied over the weatherboard save for the area under the east and north porches. All of the first-story windows have simple architrave surrounds, beaded sills, and 9/9 sash. In addition, these windows have louvered exterior blinds on wrought-iron hinges that date to at least the ca. 1835 building campaign. There are box eaves around the house with a simple cyma reversa molding below.

The roof has an exceptionally low profile, as is typical of many early structures in Powhatan and Cumberland Counties, and is covered with raised seam metal roofing. It is hipped at either end of the east facade, while the west end of each wing ends in a gable end chimney. There are fourteen shed roof dormers, three on each outward facing side of the house, and five facing the interior court. The dormers in the earliest wings have 4/4 sash, while those in the 1835 wing are 6/6. A single shed-type roof covers the eastern half of the court sheltering two of the 20th-century additions as well as the walkway to the cellars.

The eastern front of the house, the principal facade, is divided into seven bays of relatively equal spacing. From south to north, bays one through three, inclusive of the principal entrance, date to the ca. 1835 construction. Bays four through six comprise the earliest portion of the house, while the seventh bay was added sometime between the first building campaign and the 1803-06 addition. This bay is one of four end closets that had been appended to the original dwelling, and were later incorporated into the body of the structure. Evidence suggests that the second bay to the right of the existing principal entrance was a center doorway to the earliest section of the house. The accompanying sketch to an 1806 Mutual Assurance Society policy for Blenheim shows a small central porch on the east facade of the structure. This opening aligns with what had been the central entrance to the western side of the house, and would have conformed to a traditional hall and parlor plan dwelling. Minor stylistic discrepancies in the sash and moldings of this window also suggest it was introduced at a later date. Excessive wear to the interior floor in front of this window, and changes to the chairrail and dado support this hypothesis.

Above bays two, four, and six are shed roof dormers. The roofs of all the dormers extend up to the ridge of the main roof due to its low profile. The chimney that aligns with bay three was constructed during the ca. 1835 addition when a new chimney was erected back-to-back with an earlier chimney.

(See Continuation Sheet 3)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Blenheim, Powhatan County, Virginia

Continuation sheet 3

Item number 7

Page 2

7. ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

The flue from the original fireplace was then diverted into the new stack. This chimney also helps mask the slightly higher roof profile of the ca. 1835 addition. The north chimney is original to the house. It is laid up in Flemish bond, and is in a somewhat deteriorated condition. The cellar windows align with the windows above.

The entrance porch on this side of the house is one of the most distinctive and interesting exterior features of Blenheim. The gable roof is fronted by a Greek pediment of matched boards with a nicely detailed cornice. The roof is supported by six square columns with chamfered corners and lambs tongue ends. The railing and flooring appear to be replacements. A unique and interesting feature is the vaulted plaster ceiling of the porch. The entrance on the porch has double doors of three panels each, a symmetrically molded surround with corner blocks, an inner sawtooth molding, and a diamond-paned transom above. These are the only surviving Greek Revival details on the exterior of the house.

While the eastern facade is not perfectly symmetrical, there is an overall impression of balance and of continuity of form despite its three separate building episodes. This demonstrates a conscious attempt to regularize and harmonize the various sections of the house into a uniform whole.

The north facade of Blenheim has three widely spaced bays comprised of a central entrance with a four-light transom above and an equally spaced window on either side. This facade includes the 1803-06 wing plus the north end-closets that were incorporated into the main body of the structure. The three dormers correspond to the bays below. The eastern-most dormer merely lights a closet under the eave, but was obviously included to provide balance and symmetry. This was undoubtedly the principal facade of the house after the 1803-06 construction, until the 1835 wing was added. The enclosed porch that covers the entrance and west window dates to the 1930s.

The south facade is comprised entirely of the ca. 1835 wing. Originally it had four bays with a porch similar to that on the east front, minus the interior vault, and sheltered an entrance of the same caliber as that under the east porch. This porch was removed in 1958 when a new wing was constructed. The garrett dormers and cellar windows align with bays one and three.

The west side of Blenheim is the most irregular of the four, owing principally to the 20th-century additions in the courtyard. Both north and south wings have gable ends with central exterior chimneys flanked by small

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Blenheim, Powhatan County, Virginia

Continuation sheet 4

Item number 7

Page 3

For NPS use only
received
date entered

7. ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

windows in the gables. These Flemish-bond chimneys are well executed, have double sets of weatherings, molded bases, and corbelled caps. They do, however, differ in details. Both rest on English common bases. The similarity of these two chimneys in spite of having been constructed 30 years apart further demonstrates a striving for uniformity in the various construction phases of Blenheim. There is a bulkhead next to each chimney dating to the 20th century and resting on concrete footings and steps. Undoubtedly they replace earlier bulkheads as the one to the 1803-06 wing provides the only access to that cellar. Prior to the 20th-century additions, the north and south courtyard walls each had a door and window facing one another and small porches. The passageways in the north and south wings align with one another across the courtyard to form an axis through the house. The east wall had a door in the northeast corner, an entrance to the original house, and two windows to the right of the door. There are dormers above the bays of the north and south walls and above the center bay of the east wall. The block chimney was constructed in 1941.

The entire house rests upon a low brick foundation, the original section of English common bond, and the early 19th-century sections of three and five course American bond. All of the foundations have had extensive repair, and all cellar windows were replaced in the mid-20th century with larger metal sash.

Cellars

The cellar walls of the earliest wing are laid up primarily in English common bond although there have been substantial repairs made to all but the north wall in three course American bond. There are 9 X 14 inch hand-dressed sill plates and center beam with the floor joists mortised into the sills at 20 inch intervals. The cellar is divided into two equal sections by a wooden partition running from east to west. It has an oak frame mortised and pinned together, and covered with pine boards spaced at one inch intervals. The center door has wooden hinges and a wood covered lock. Painted on one of the oak uprights is the number 1834. Judging by the style of the numbers, this could be the installation date of the partition.

The cellar under the 1803-06 wing is similar to that under the 18th-century portion of Blenheim. The walls are of three course American bond and have had extensive repair, while the framing is essentially identical to that of the earlier cellar. There is a fireplace in the west wall adjacent to the bulkhead steps. As with the other cellar, there is an earthen floor. The east end has not been totally excavated. The east wall of this cellar is formed of the English common bond foundation from the original portion of

(See Continuation Sheet 5)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Blenheim, Powhatan County, Virginia

Continuation sheet 5

Item number 7

Page 4

7. ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Blenheim. A window in this foundation retains its wooden grill. Logically, a first-floor window would have aligned with this opening before the 1803-06 wing was constructed.

The cellar under the ca. 1835 wing is walled with brick laid up in five course American bond. There are two fireplaces in the cellar, one in the west chimney and the other in the base of the chimney in the northeast corner of the cellar. The floor is paved with brick, part of which has now been cemented over. This cellar was used as the kitchen until the early 20th century when this function was moved to the first floor of the north wing.

Interior

All three wings of Blenheim have single pile plans. The original section has a hall and parlor plan with exterior end chimneys and fireplaces. By 1803, four closets had been added to the house on either side of the two chimneys. These rooms were substantially reworked during subsequent additions. The 1803-06 wing added a stair-hall, an additional room, and a porch on its south side. At that time it appears the northeastern end closets were incorporated into the main body of the dwelling and the orientation of the house changed from east-west to north-south. The south or ca. 1835 wing is the largest, and provides the most formal spaces, with a center stair-hall and two flanking rooms. This addition encapsulated the south end-closets of the original house into the body of the structure, one becoming a vestibule from the east entrance, and the other a pantry on the west side facing the courtyard.

The two-room plan of the original structure was significantly altered during the 1803-06 reconstruction. The center partition was opened to almost the full width of the house and four hinged doors installed in the doorway. Based upon molding profiles of the five doorways and four windows in these two rooms, only one doorway and three windows are original to this section. The doorways flanking the fireplaces, and that leading to the 1803-06 hall appear to have been installed when the north wing was constructed. The doorway that now leads to the 1941 kitchen, the window to the left of it, the parlor window, and southeast window are original. These rooms, as well as those of the 1803-06 wing, have architrave moldings, though of differing profiles, and matched-board dados with chairrails. The walls and ceiling are plastered above the dado as they are in all of the house. The two Federal mantels in these rooms are identical and have free standing fluted doric columns on either side of the firebox. The entablature and heavily molded cornice and mantel shelf break forward above the columns. The dado adjacent to the mantels differs from that in the remainder of the two rooms in that it has

(See Continuation Sheet 6)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Blenheim, Powhatan County, Virginia

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet 6

Item number 7

Page 5

7. ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

recessed panels. These were probably installed along with Federal mantels when the interior was being made more stylish in the early 19th century. There is a beaded picture rail surrounding both rooms at door height.

Of special interest in these rooms and the north wing are the six-panel doors. They have been grained to resemble mahogany with a painted inlay band around the raised portion of each panel. Many of the doors retain their brass and wrought-iron "shop made" hardware and HL hinges. Throughout the house the vast majority of hardware and fittings appear to date to 1803-06 or ca. 1835. At least two of the doors date to the 18th century.

Of the four original exterior closets, two now serve as pantries. Each has simple beaded moldings, a single window, and plastered walls. They also retain what appears to be their original blue-green paint. The northeast closet has recently been converted into a bathroom, the only major interior change to the earliest portions of the house in the 20th century.

The wide hall of the 1803-06 north wing has a partially enclosed winder stair in the southeast corner. In the east wall is a doorway leading to the original section of the house and another to one of the pantries. The original exterior doorways with transoms are on the north and south walls while a doorway in the center of the western wall leads to an adjacent bedroom. This room has windows in both north and south walls with a fireplace centered in the western wall. Both rooms have architrave moldings and matched board dados with simple chairrails. The woodwork in the hall is natural finish, while that in the bedroom has been painted. The bedroom mantel has a heavily molded firebox surround flanked by fluted double pilasters with an entablature that breaks forward over them and contains recessed panels. The cornice and mantel shelf are heavily molded. This room was used as a kitchen from the early 20th century until 1941.

The upper story or garrett of these two wings is simply, though completely, finished even to the plastering of closets and storage areas under the eaves. There are three principal rooms all with beaded trim and pine floors. The room over the north wing has a fireplace with beaded surround and a simple mantel shelf flanked by small gable end windows. This room also has two dormers. Two dressing rooms each with a dormer are on either side of the entrance to this room. Of considerable interest is the finely grained three panel closet door adjacent to the south chimney. Because of its secluded location, its paint is in an exceptional state of preservation.

The south or ca. 1835 wing of the house is the largest of the three original sections of Blenheim and is the most elaborately ornamented. Here

(See Continuation Sheet 7)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Blenheim, Powhatan County, Virginia

Continuation sheet 7

Item number 7

Page 6

For NPS use only
received
date entered

7. ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

the simple asymmetrical architrave moldings and plain dado of the earlier wings give way to refined Greek Revival details that became popular during the 1820s. This would have been highly stylish for its time and locale. The wing is comprised of a formal parlor, entrance vestibule, center stair-hall, and bedroom on the first floor. Each room has symmetrically molded door and window surrounds with molded corner blocks. While the decorative treatment of all the woodwork is a variation on the same reed and flute theme, the degree of elaboration in each room denotes its relative importance to the other rooms.

At the east end of the wing is the large, formal parlor. The east and south walls each have two equally spaced windows, the west wall a single off-center doorway to the stair-hall, and the north wall a center fireplace with a doorway to its right leading to the east vestibule.

The parlor window and door surrounds and wainscot are the most elaborate in the house playing fluting off curved and angular reeding. The wainscot is divided into panels each with applied bands of reeding and plain corner blocks. There are flat six-panel doors in this room, as there are in the entire wing, which are painted to match the woodwork. The base molding in the parlor, vestibule, and center hall is marblized. Above each window is a reeded scroll cornice with gilded acorn finials. The mantel in this room is the most high-style and well-executed of the eight in the house. The firebox has a heavily molded surround flanked by free standing reeded doric columns resting on plinths and molded bases. The full entablature breaks forward over the columns, as does the mantel shelf. Inset panels in the frieze above each column are bordered by beading, while a guttae band replaces a denticulated band at the base of the cornice. Between the columns the frieze contains delicately executed applied acanthus leaf decoration.

The adjacent vestibule has three working doorways, one exterior door to the east, a doorway into the 18th-century wing, and a third to the parlor. Directly opposite the entrance is a false door that opens onto the side of the chimney, but was placed there for symmetry. The walls are paneled to the top of the door surrounds. The vestibule is lighted from the transom above the double entrance doors.

Running from north to south, the center stair-hall is the second most elaborate of the south-wing rooms. The former exterior entrance with a diamond-pane transom above in the south wall now leads to the largest of the 1958 additions, while the north door, under the stairway, leads to the smaller courtyard addition also dating to 1958. The center door in the west wall opens to the west-end bedroom. The dado has raised panels with a reeded chairrail. The most significant feature of the hall is the finely executed

(See Continuation Sheet 8)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Blenheim, Powhatan County, Virginia

Continuation sheet 8

Item number 7

Page 7

For NPS use only
received
date entered

7. ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

stairway. It is an open-string, triple-run type with walnut newels, balusters and handrail. The newels at the top, bottom, and landings are turned while the circular balusters, two per tread, are straight. The dado and chairrail follow the curve of the eases and ramps of the handrail as the stairs ascend. Pilaster-like profiles of the newels are applied to the dado at each point where the stairs break for a run or landing. There is a carved patera enclosed within an ogee curve applied to the end bracket below each step. The stairwell is lighted from above by one of the dormers, creating a rather dramatic effect in the semi-dark hall.

The end room or bedroom is the simplest of the first-floor Greek Revival rooms with a single exit door, two windows, and a central fireplace on the west wall. The fireplace surround has double doric pilasters on either side of the firebox with reeded diamond patterns applied to the frieze above each pilaster, and a heavily molded cornice and mantel shelf. The dado is divided into flat recessed panels. A new doorway was introduced into the south wall leading to a bathroom in the 1958 wing.

The second floor contains two bedrooms connected by a center hall open to the stairway. Each bedroom has two dormers and built-in closets under the eaves of the house. Both have fireplaces, their surrounds being simplified versions of that in the lower bedroom with reeded diamond panels, pilasters, and heavily molded cornices. Window and door surrounds are comprised of architrave moldings, while the floors are of pine. In the east bedroom a small door in the back of the closet beside the chimney connects this floor with the second floor of the earlier wings. This connection was not introduced, however, until the 1920s. The southern dormer in the upper hall was extended in 1958 to allow for a second-floor bathroom over that addition.

Three subsequent additions have been constructed during the 20th century. A kitchen addition that runs along the north side of the court was built in 1941. This replaced an earlier porch. Also in the court, opposite the 1941 addition, is a small, one-room addition dating to 1958 that replaced a porch. The largest of the 20th-century additions projects to the southeast at a 45 degree angle from the south facade of the ca. 1835 wing. It, too, was erected in 1958. This contains a dining room, kitchen, enclosed porch, and service rooms. With this addition Blenheim is equipped to accommodate two separate living units, one in the earliest two wings, and the other in the 1835/1958 wings.

A most significant and fortunate feature of Blenheim is that the 20th-century additions containing modern service areas and utilities have merely been appended to the house, and have not intruded into the fabric of the

(See Continuation Sheet 9)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Blenheim, Powhatan County, Virginia
Continuation sheet 9

Item number 7

Page 8

7. ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

original structure. Save for one bathroom and electrical service, the original three wings remain essentially as they were in the 1800s. Any changes that have been made would be relatively reversible.

Outbuildings

The original outbuildings at Blenheim were northwest of the dwelling house. These included a kitchen, barns, dairy, smoke and ice houses, and other miscellaneous structures. Of these, only the smoke house is extant. It is a square building with a metal covered pyramidal roof. As the main house, it has been aluminum sided. By its framing construction, mortise and tenon-pegged joints, and rose-headed nails, it appears to date to the early 1800s.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Blenheim, Powhatan County, Virginia

Continuation sheet 10

Item number 8

Page 1

8. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The profession of surveying was accorded a considerable degree of prestige in 18th-century Virginia, on par with its importance to an economy based upon land acquisition and commercial agriculture. There developed a close correlation between the profession and community leadership, which is born out in Mayo's life. Not only was Mayo the first official county surveyor for Goochland, he was also one of its first justices, posts he retained until his death. By 1730, he was also a major in the militia. These positions allowed him to become one of the major land owners in the colony, at one time holding in excess of 25,000 acres. This included three major plantations, Indian Camp plus those on Fine Creek and Willis River, some lesser farms, and at least three commercial mills. With a group of 12 men including William Randolph, Nicholas Merriwether, Jr., and Peter Jefferson, he patented over 171,000 acres on the western frontier.

William Mayo died in 1744, leaving his Indian Camp holdings to his son, John Mayo. At that time, the plantation included a house, outbuildings, and a mill. John Mayo, who was a member of the House of Burgesses from Cumberland County in 1762, passed the estate to his son, William Mayo. This second William Mayo was a member of the House of Delegates in 1777-1781 and 1783-1785, and a first member of the Cumberland County Court. Fragmentary evidence of 18th-century construction at Blenheim dates to the second and third generations of the Mayo occupation.

The original section of Blenheim had a traditional hall and parlor plan with exterior end chimneys. The simple lines and asymmetry of the story and a half frame dwelling, that have been continued in subsequent additions, bespeak its origins as a vernacular, Piedmont Virginia plantation home. The low, half-story roof line can be seen repeated in other early Powhatan County residences, as well as some in Cumberland and Goochland Counties from which the former derives. These extant early structures are similar in size and scale to Blenheim, and represent a somewhat localized building tradition.

Two early 19th-century wings significantly altered the appearance of the original dwelling. As a result, only vestiges of the 18th-century house remain midst the 1803-06 wing built by the second William Mayo, and the ca. 1835 wing constructed during the Hobson ownership.

In 1815 William Mayo, then residing in Henrico County, sold Indian Camp including 1177 acres to the brothers John and Joseph Hobson of Cumberland County. By 1819 John Hobson was listed as residing in Richmond, while Joseph remained at Indian Camp. Joseph Hobson retained ownership of the estate after his brother's death in 1824 until his own death in 1832. At that time ownership passed to Joseph's wife, Mary Hobson. In 1835, this estate was

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Blenheim, Powhatan County, Virginia

Continuation sheet 11

Item number 8

Page 2

8. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

divided, with Mary receiving 595 acres. By subsequent land purchases, she left Blenheim, including 611 acres, to their son, Joseph V. Hobson, in 1860. (The first official record of the name Blenheim appears in the Cumberland County Land Book of 1861.) Joseph V. Hobson was a member of the 4th Virginia Calvary during the War Between the States, and a member of the House of Delegates in 1887-88.

The Hobson or south wing of Blenheim harmonizes and balances with the earlier portions of the house in scale, massing, fenestration, and materials. The vernacular origins of the house are thereby carried further into the 19th century. This overall simplicity of Blenheim is the result of the conscious efforts of these early builders to give a sense of uniformity and balance to what easily could have become a rather disparate collection of structures.

Only in the east porch does the exterior belie the well-executed interior of the house. Its well-proportioned rooms have retained their original woodwork, hardware, flooring, and in some instances, paint, including wood graining and marblizing. The ca. 1835 wing is an outstanding example of Greek Revival wood carving and decoration. Of special note are the Greek Revival and Federal mantels. The remoteness of Powhatan County during this time makes the interior of the south wing even more unique and significant.

In 1881, while residing in Richmond, Joseph V. Hobson sold Blenheim to two sisters, Sallie W. and Annie F. Blanton, who were married to Blanton cousins. In 1901 the estate was divided, with Sallie and her husband, M. Barsdale Blanton, retaining 250 acres inclusive of the house. At that time they took up residence at Blenheim.

From 1901 until 1971, the Blantons transformed Blenheim from a grain and tobacco plantation to a dairy farm, a change reflected in the farm buildings put up during this period. It was also during this time that three 20th-century additions to the house were constructed. In 1942, the farm passed to the, then, three unmarried Blanton children. Today it is owned by Miss Nancy T. Blanton, and Mrs. R.E.D. Blanton, widow of Nancy's brother, Rutherford Edwin Douglas Blanton, the children of Sallie and M.B. Blanton. The estate is now a Polled Hereford cattle farm.

By happy circumstance, the interiors of Blenheim have been preserved from the ravages of modernization by the additions that were constructed in 1941 and 1958. They have allowed modern necessities to be placed in these appendages with a minimum of intrusion into the early fabric of the house. The largest of these additions, that appended to the ca. 1835 south wing in 1958 harmonizes with it in scale and mass, while, being set at a 45 degree

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Blenheim, Powhatan County, Virginia

Continuation sheet 12

Item number 8

Page 3

8. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

angle to the rest of the structure, allows it to be read as a thing apart from its 19th-century neighbors. Blenheim has developed a patena through continual use, and has not suffered from thoughtless 20th-century improvements.

In 1982, the Blenheim Trust was established by G.T. Smith, grandson of Sallie and M.B. Blanton, for the purpose of preserving Blenheim as a permanent home for the Blanton descendants.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

Blenheim, Powhatan County, Virginia

Continuation sheet 13

Item number 9

Page 1

For NPS use only

received

date entered

9. Major Bibliographical References

Couture, Richard T. Powhatan: A Bicentennial History. Richmond:
The Dietz Press, 1980.

Cumberland County. Deed Books 1, 4, 6.

Will Books 2, 8.

Cumberland County Historical Society, Inc. Cumberland County and
Its People. Marceline, MO: Walsworth Publishing Co., 1985.

Foley. Virginia Families: Early Virginia Families Along the James
River--The Deep Roots and Tangled Branches. Vol. 1. Richmond, 1974.

Goochland County. Deed Books 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.
Will Books 1742-1745.

Goochland County Historical Society. Quarterly Journal -
Vol. 1. Fall 1969, p. 4.
Vol. III. Spring 1976, p. 23.
Vol. X. Spring 1978, p. 15.

Hughes, Sarah. Surveyors and Statesmen: Land Measuring in Colonial
Virginia. The Virginia Surveyors Foundation, LTD, and the Virginia
Association of Surveyors, Inc., 1979.

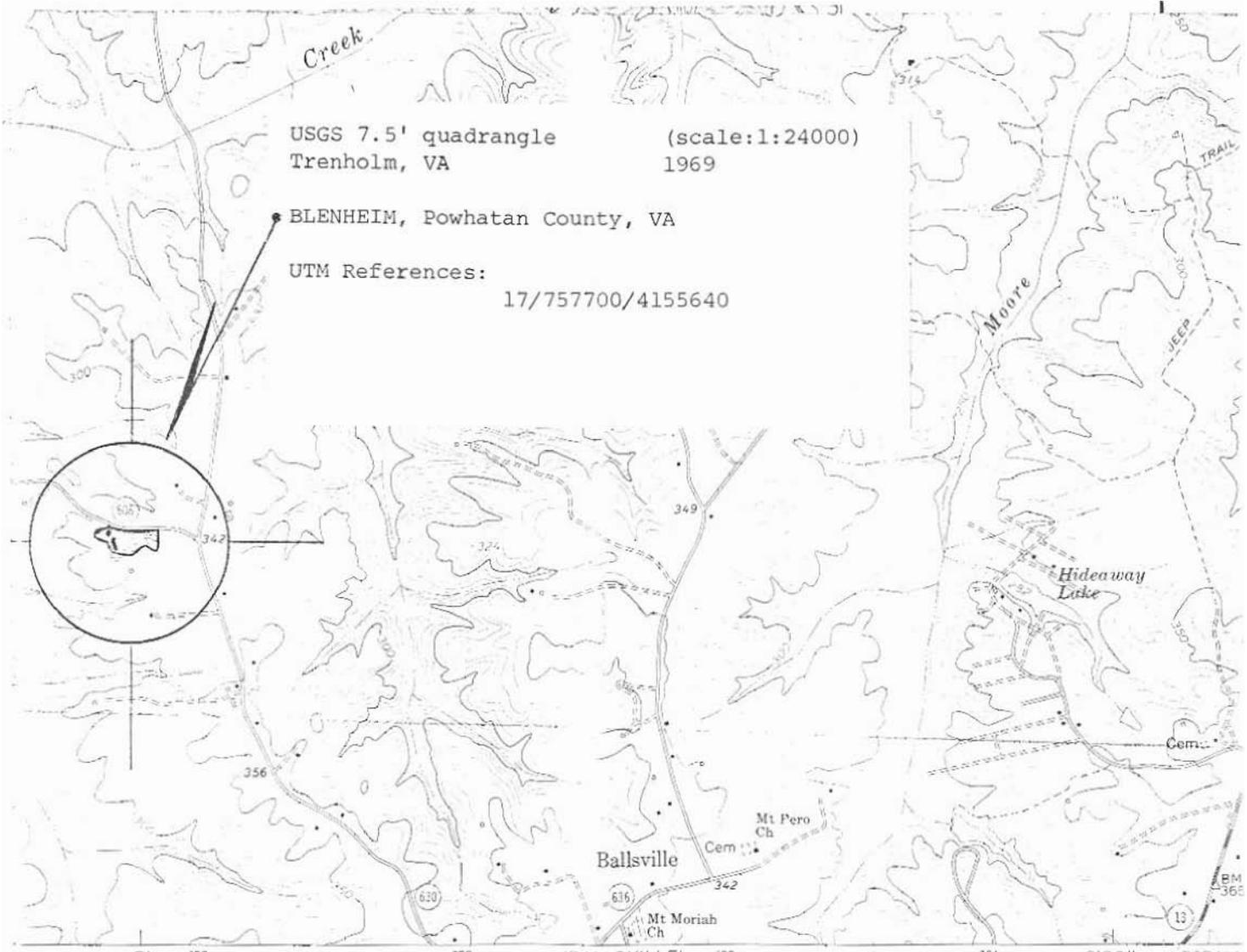
Manaren, Louis H., and Clifford Dowday. The History of Henrico
County. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1984.

Moore, Richard. History of Henrico Parish and Old St. John's
Church: 1611 to 1904. Richmond: Williams Publishing Co., 1904.

Mutual Assurance Society Policies.
Vol. 28, No. 2077, 1803.
Vol. 40, No. 1139, 1806.

Nugent, Nell Marion. Cavaliers and Pioneers: Abstracts of Virginia
Land Patents and Grants 1695-1732. Vol. 3, Richmond: Virginia
State Library, 1979.

(See Continuation Sheet 14)



USGS 7.5' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)
Trenholm, VA 1969

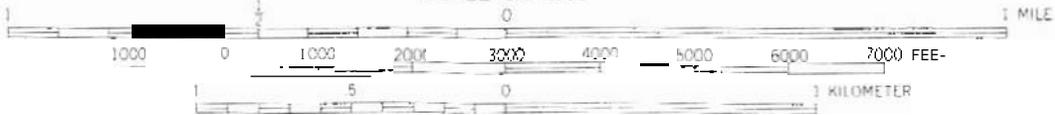
BLENHEIM, Powhatan County, VA

UTM References:
17/757700/4155640



5' 758 759 (BALLSVILLE) 760 761 2'30" TOBACCO

SCALE 1:24000



47'
MILS

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

TRUE NORTH
LINE OF SHEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C 20242
AND VIRGINIA DIVISION OF MINERAL RESOURCES, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA 22903
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

