

VLR-1/16/73 NRHP-4/11/73

Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Virginia	
COUNTY: Rappahannock	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Montpelier

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
.2 mi. SE of Rt. 231, 1.5 mi. S of intersection with Rt. 707.

CITY OR TOWN:
Seventh District
Sperryville vicinity (Congressman James Kenneth Robinson)

STATE: Virginia CODE: 51 COUNTY: Rappahannock CODE: 157

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes: Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
		<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) vacant	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Mr. and Mrs. James William Fletcher

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Sperryville STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

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

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory

DATE OF SURVEY: 1958 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Virginia

COUNTY: Rappahannock

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

I. General Statement:

A. Architectural character: Montpelier is an unusually large and imposing plantation house for the area with an eighteenth century core and additions from several later periods. The evolutionary nature of the house gives it its principal architectural interest.

B. Condition of fabric: Structurally sound but not well maintained.

II. Description of the Exterior:

A. Overall dimensions: The two-story house is eleven-bays (110 ft.) long on the east side. From the west, it becomes apparent that the house structure is made up of a five-bay main block with north and south three-bay wings. The slope of the hill creates a high English basement on the east side. At one time the wings were apparently one-story; a brick second story was added.

B. Foundations: Uncoursed rubble limestone.

C. Wall construction: Stone and brick are covered with a coat of smooth tan-yellow scored stucco to resemble ashlar. Elements such as keystones are also delineated.

D. Porches: On the west, a three-bay porch with a bracketed cornice is supported by four piers. On the east, the dominant feature is a two-story verandah stretching the entire length of the house with eight large stuccoed provincial Tuscan columns. The verandah flooring is supported by eight brick piers, one located under each column.

E. Chimneys: There is an interior-end chimney at each end of the main block, and one at the end of each wing. All have brick stacks and corbelled caps.

F. Openings:

1. Doorways and doors: The doorways in the central bay opening into the hall have rectangular transoms with geometric designs and double doors. The doorways opening from the wings onto the verandah have rectangular transoms with two rows of three lights. The south doorway has no transom. The center-bay doorway in the English basement has double doors and a transom made up of two rows of five lights.

2. Windows: Some of the windows on the east side retain their early nine-over-nine or six-over-nine wooden double hung sashes. Others, and all of those on the west side, have had the sashes changed to two-over-two lights in the early twentieth century.

G. Roof: The gable roof covering the central block has a cross gable on the east and the west slope. The gable roof system is complicated by the lower ridge line and western slope of the wings, although the eastern roof slope appears to be uniform as it extends over the verandah.

III. Description of the Interior:

A. Floor plan: The house is only one room deep. In the

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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	Virginia	
COUNTY	Rappahannock	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER		DATE

(Number all entries)

description -2-

basement a series of rooms stretch along the length. On the first floor the main block is an example of a central hall two-over-two plan. A small hall opens off the north and south rooms and leads to a narrow stair. From that point, another room opens in the end of each wing. A similar plan is followed on the second floor.

B. Stairways: The main stair is a two-run, open-string stair with rectangular balusters and a molded handrail. There is an ornamental bracket work and a quarter fan design on each riser spandrel. The secondary stairs in each wing are enclosed, one-run stairs.

C. Wall and ceiling finish: The ceilings are plaster. In many rooms the paper is peeling, revealing nineteenth century geometric designs painted on the walls. The north room in the main block is finished with circa 1800 style panelling.

D. Doorways and doors: Six-panelled wooden doors have doorways with architrave trim. Panelled double doors with a cross bar lead to the exterior from the hall.

E. Trim: There is a crown molding cornice and a molded chair rail in all of the rooms except the second floor wing rooms. The most elaborate room in the house, the northern room of the main block is fully panelled. A wide entablature with a molded cornice, Wall-of-Troy dentil and a frieze with metope and triglyph encircles the room. Two fluted pilasters flank a wide panel above the mantel. The windows have architrave trim and are deep set in all the rooms, except in those in the second floor wing rooms.

F. Heating: Fireplaces in every room provide the only heating arrangement in the house. The most elaborate mantel, in the panelled room, has an entablature with a molded cornice, Wall-of-Troy dentil, stylized metope and triglyph frieze and panelled pilasters. Other features of the mantels are wide shelves, panelled and fluted pilasters, dentils, quarter fan designs and a marbled finish. In the second floor wing rooms, the mantel shelves are shallower and the frieze is not as deep as in the other mantels.

IV. Site:

A. General setting and orientation: Montpelier is situated on a hill in the F.T. Valley. The west facade looks out to the Blue Ridge Mountains, and the east across the former terraces and fields to the Hazel River.

B. Outbuildings: Square white frame buildings with pyramidal roofs, one a smoke house and the other a storage house, sit to the north and south of the house. When the original foundations deteriorated, these buildings were raised and put on cinder block foundations. A frame, gable roofed, two-story cabin with an exterior end chimney is located south of the house and outbuildings. Several late nineteenth century or early twentieth century barns and sheds are clustered to the south, and a picturesque mid-nineteenth century barn surrounded by a rail fence

3. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Montpelier is the most historically noted and architecturally imposing early plantation house remaining in Rappahannock County. Dramatically situated on a steep hill, it has long been a focal point for the surrounding F.T. (Francis Thornton) Valley stretching from Sperryville to the Rappahannock, Culpeper and Madison county lines.

Francis Thornton obtained a grant of many thousands of acres in present day Rappahannock including the F.T. Valley. He and his children, William, John and Mary, came to this wilderness area about 1740, in part to escape the menace of malaria-bearing mosquitos in the lowlands. Francis Thornton built Montpelier for William, and another house, Thornton Hill, at the head of the valley for John. George Washington was a cousin of the Thorntons and was a frequent visitor at Montpelier.

Montpelier was inherited by Dr. Philip Thornton, son of William, and his French wife, Caroline Homassel, who, it is said, entertained Louis Philippe of France there. The property remained in the Thornton family until the death of Caroline Homassel in 1876, when it was purchased by Zechariah Hudson Shackelford. The Shackelfords kept the house until the late 1960's, when it became the property of James W. Fletcher and his wife Mildred Thornton, a descendant of Francis Thornton.

Although the house has undergone alterations and enlargement on the exterior, it retains much fine early woodwork, and is important as one of the principle seats of the Thorntons. Presently unoccupied, Montpelier remains one of the major landmarks of piedmont Virginia.

G.H.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Virginia	
COUNTY Rappahannock	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

description -3-

stands at the bottom of the hill to the east.

G.P.H.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Files of Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	38° 35' 45"	78° 14' 24"		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	38° 35' 45"	78° 13' 15"				
SE	38° 34' 45"	78° 13' 15"				
SW	38° 34' 45"	78° 14' 24"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 400 acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission DATE: November 1972

STREET AND NUMBER: Room 116 Ninth Street State Office Building

CITY OR TOWN: Richmond STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

National State Local

Name: J.R. Fishburne, Director
Title: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

Date: _____

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

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: _____

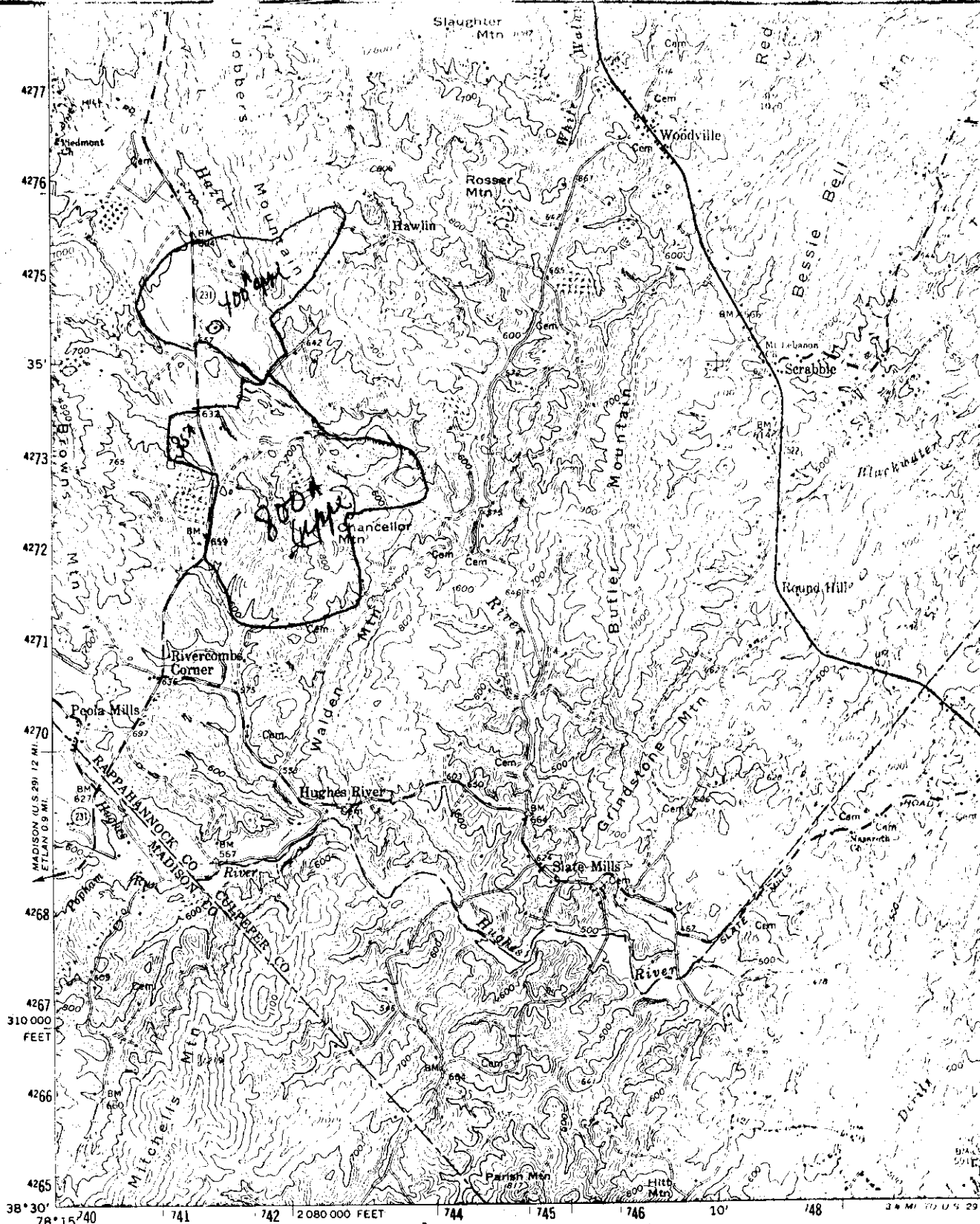
ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date: _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

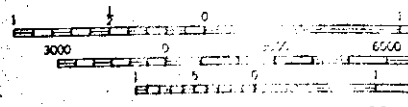
Montpelier



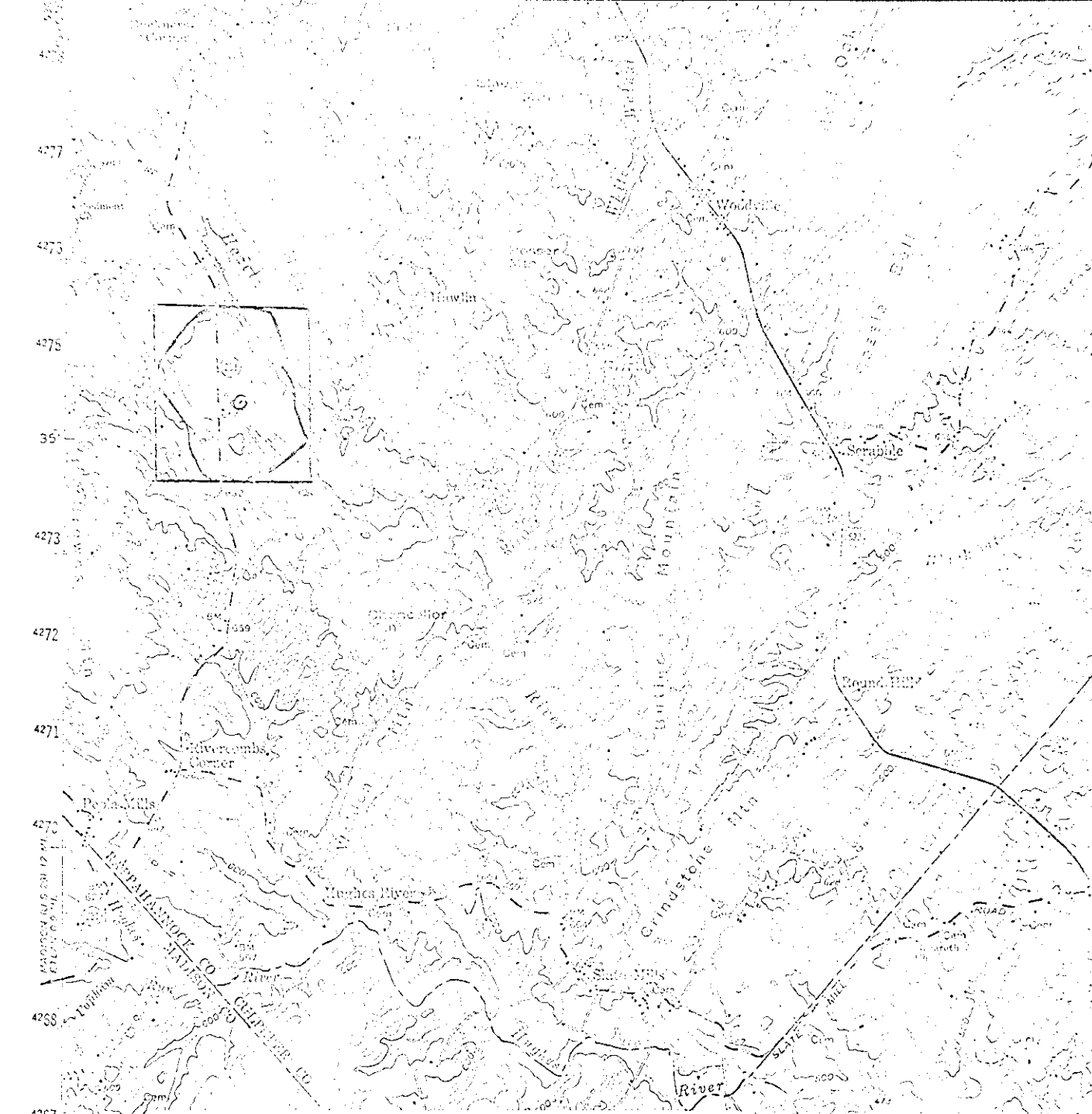
MADISON
5360 1/2

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
 Control by USGS, USC&GS, and USCE
 Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial
 photographs taken 1959. Field checked 1961
 Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
 10,000-foot grid based on Virginia coordinate system, north zone
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
 zone 17, shown in blue
 Areas covered by dashed light-blue pattern
 are subject to controlled inundation to 459.5 feet

UTM GRID AND 1961 MAGNETIC NORTH
 DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



THIS MAP COMPLETES
 FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOL
 AND VIRGINIA DIVISION OF MIN
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAP



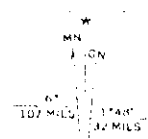
4277
4275
4273
4272
4271
4270
4269
4268
4267
4266
4265
38° 30'
78° 15' 40"

U.S.G.S. 15' quadrangle Sperryville, Va.
scale: 1:62500 1961

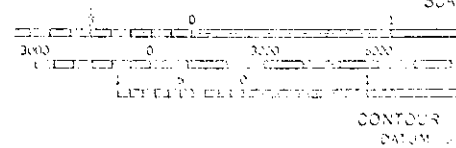
MONTPELIER	
latitude	longitude
NW 38° 35' 45"	78° 14' 24"
NE 38° 35' 45"	78° 13' 15"
SE 38° 34' 45"	78° 13' 15"
SW 38° 34' 45"	78° 14' 24"

(MADISON)
5300 W.

Mapped, ed
Control by U
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1959. Field checked 1961
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Virginia coordinate system, north zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 17, shown in blue
Areas covered by dashed light-blue pattern are subject to controlled inundation to 459.5 feet



UTM GRID AND 1961 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



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A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC W