

VLR 4/12/02
NRHP 9/14/02

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name **Marlbrook**
other names/site number **Cherry Hill; DHR file no. 081-0009**

2. Location

street & number **4973 Forge Road (SR 608)** **N/A** not for publication
city or town **Glasgow** vicinity
state **Virginia** code **VA** county **Rockbridge** code **163** zip code **24555**

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)


Signature of certifying official/Title
Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

7/25/02
Date

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

Date

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ___ entered in the National Register.
___ See continuation sheet.
- ___ determined eligible for the National Register.
___ See continuation sheet.
- ___ determined not eligible for the National Register.
- ___ removed from the National Register.
- ___ other (explain):

Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
5	1	buildings
0	0	sites
1	1	structures
0	0	objects
6	2	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

<i>Category</i>	<i>Subcategory</i>
DOMESTIC	single dwelling
DOMESTIC	secondary structure
AGRICULTURE	animal facility
EDUCATION	school

<i>Category</i>	<i>Subcategory</i>
DOMESTIC	single dwelling
DOMESTIC	secondary structure
AGRICULTURE	animal facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

Georgian

foundation	stone
walls	brick
	wood
roof	stone
other	wood
	stone

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more 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)

ARCHITECTURE

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Architect/Builder

UNKNOWN

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more 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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

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 a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past fifty years.

Period of Significance

ca. 1795-1952

Significant Dates

ca. 1795; 1804

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately **123.33** acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	632010	4168860	3	17	632770	4167870
2	17	632490	4168210	4	17	632950	4167960

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Leslie A. Giles and J. Daniel Pezzoni, consultants; with Tom Kastner (Ruth Anderson McCulloch Branch, Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities)		
organization	Landmark Preservation Associates	date	January 15, 2001
street & number	6 Houston Street	telephone	(540) 464-5315
city or town	Lexington	state	VA
		zip code	24450

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

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.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name	Sallie T. Letcher estate (contact: George J. Tompkins, executor)		
street & number	Box 606	telephone	(540) 258-2945
city or town	Glasgow	state	VA
		zip code	24555

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Marlbrook
Rockbridge County, Va.

DESCRIPTION

Summary

Marlbrook, originally known as Cherry Hill, is located in Rockbridge County, Virginia, on Forge Road (SR 608, also known as the old Lexington to Lynchburg Turnpike) near its intersection with Stoner Hollow Road (SR 688) about three miles east of Natural Bridge. The house is the centerpiece of a 123.33-acre, four-parcel property drained by Crawford Creek, a tributary of the James River on the northwest side of Sallings Mountain. In the yard of the main house is a log springhouse, a brick cistern, a frame carport, and a small storage shed. To the west of the house, past the driveway, is a large post-and-beam barn, a frame tenant house, and a frame garage/workshop. A number of large ornamental conifers and deciduous trees (principally oak, maple, and Norway spruce) are located in the immediate vicinity of the house; otherwise the property is mostly comprised of well-tended fenced pastures and hayfields, with wooded slopes on the surrounding mountainsides. A portion of the property, located near a ridge line across Forge Road from the dwelling, includes a limestone quarry mined for the foundation materials of the house.

Inventory

1. Marlbrook/Cherry Hill (ca. 1795; 1804; 1940s; mid-1990s). Contributing building.
2. Log springhouse (mid-19th century). Contributing building.
3. Cistern (1870s). Contributing structure.
4. Barn (first quarter 20th century). Contributing building.
5. Tenant house (1945). Contributing building.
6. Garage/workshop (1945). Contributing building.
7. Storage building (ca. 1954). Non-contributing building.
8. Carport (1954). Non-contributing structure.

House: Exterior

Marlbrook is a two-story, five-bay brick farmhouse with a one-and-a-half-story brick east wing and a balancing frame west wing. The house's foundation is of coursed, roughly dressed limestone and its walls are built with handmade bricks laid in Flemish bond with queen closers marking the corners and flanking the door and window openings. The finely coursed brickwork, somewhat weathered but otherwise sound, shows no clear evidence of pencilled mortar joints. The house's matching north and south elevations have centered entries, each with a simple single-leaf six-panel door topped by a four-light transom and sheltered behind modern eight-light wooden storm doors. All door and window openings on the main block's two long elevations have single segmentally arched brick courses that crown spandrel panels above the windows and doors. First-story windows incorporate early -- if not original -- nine-over-nine double-hung wood sash with pegged frames,

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Description (continued)

molded muntins, and some old (wavy) glass panes, set into triple-stepped wood architrave moldings that retain shutter pintel hardware. Windows on the second story are similarly detailed, but are smaller and have nine-over-six sash. In the 1930s the house still retained louvered shutters at the windows. The north and south elevations are further enlivened by classical cornices with a crown molding, a plain fascia, a soffit, and bed moldings that are comprised of cavetto and ovolo moldings and dentils. Carved into a brick on the left-hand side of the north elevation's doorway are the initials "W.T.G." Below it has been carved a date, "1843 [or 1848]". Carved while the house was owned by William Thompson, the initials may reflect (in part) his name.

The house's gable ends each have a single interior-end chimney with a rebuilt upper stack of brick laid in stretcher bond and topped with a corbelled cap. Each chimney contains three flues. At attic level, small rectangular window openings presently filled with louvered wood vents flank the chimney. Four-light hinged windows, set into wood frames (of which one pegged example survives), are stored in the attic and seasonally replace the louvered vents. The roof is covered with Buckingham slate shingles that were installed in the 1940s. The north elevation, facing Forge Road, retains the ghost marks of a former one-story full-length hipped porch (circa 1875), replaced in the 1940s by the present stone-paved stoop to the center entrance, with five broad steps up from ground level and simple wrought-iron handrails. The south elevation, once the principal façade, also retains evidence of a former porch or portico. In this instance, ghost marks on the brickwork define a gabled single-bay portico at the center entry. A 1930s photograph indicates the porch was supported by turned posts. At present the entrance is accessed by an unsheltered stoop, crafted from large quarried stones, four steps up from ground level. A short brick path leading to the stoop connects to an asphalt-paved driveway in front of the house. At the southeast corner of the main block is a small shed-roofed enclosure (once gabled), that shelters the inlets and diverter valves for the nearby cistern.

Attached to the east end of the main block is a one-and-a-half-story gabled kitchen wing, dated 1804, that appears to have originally been detached from the house. The wing may have been built on approximately the site of an earlier log kitchen wing. The wing is constructed of brickwork laid in very irregular American bond, and features a massive exterior end brick chimney with stepped shoulders. The date of the wing is derived from a group of bricks inscribed with "1804 TH 12 JUNE D[]G[]," located above the main doorway. Sheltered by a full-length porch on the south elevation, this inscription is easily picked out. Wall openings are topped with brick header courses and retain original six-over-six double-hung windows and reproduction diagonally braced single-leaf six-panel doors. An open breezeway between the main dwelling and the kitchen, created by an extension of the wing's gable roof, was partially enclosed by the turn of the twentieth century (as shown in historic photographs). In the 1940s the former breezeway space was completely enclosed

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Rockbridge County, Va.**Description (continued)**

shown in historic photographs). In the 1940s the former breezeway space was completely enclosed during a major remodeling overseen by owner Sallie Tompkins Locher. The enclosed breezeway features a north wall of brick infill designed to match the 1804 irregular American-bond brickwork; a distinct vertical joint sets it apart from the Flemish-bond brickwork of the main block. Perhaps concurrently, the formerly detached kitchen's north wall was partially redone, camouflaging the junction between original and later brickwork and accommodating the relocation of an original window. On the sheltered south side of the wing, the 1940s-era infill was accomplished using weatherboarded frame construction that butts up against and clearly reveals the original corner of the brick kitchen. This section of the infilled breezeway incorporates a simple four-light transom above a diagonally braced four-panel door, and a pair of double-hung windows. The wing's south-side porch retains early square post supports, although it has been enclosed with more modern board-and-batten siding and large fixed windows. The porch's shed roof also shelters the stone staircase that leads to the basement-level cellar under the east end of the main block. The slate-shingled gable roof has two gabled dormers, with six-over-six double-hung wood sash, on each plane. The gable end chimney stack is flanked by four-pane hinged sash windows.

West of the main block is a mid-1990s frame addition built by farm manager Fred Fainter to the designs of Staunton architect Doug Roler. At one-and-a-half stories, the modern wing mirrors the height of the east-end kitchen wing but is somewhat larger in plan. Built over a full basement, the west wing rests on a concrete block foundation to which roughly dressed coursed limestone blocks (obtained from the quarry on the property) were applied as a veneer. The clapboard-sided frame walls feature numerous single and grouped nine-over-nine and six-over-nine double-hung windows, many with transoms. A simple gable roof with slate shingles and a pair of gabled dormers on each plane tops the wing, which incorporates multiple projections, recesses, and several south-side entrances in its design. The westernmost end of the wing has a shed-roof sunroom covered by a standing-seam metal roof.

House: Interior

Marlbrook's original basement, accessed by a formerly exterior stone staircase (now enclosed by the porch) has only one room and is located under the east end of the main block. A reproduction beaded-board batten door, using the original door's wrought-iron strap hinges and wooden lock hardware, provides entry to the space. A stone-lined and -faced cooking fireplace with an immense opening spanned by a hewn wood lintel dominates the room. The stone foundation walls have stucco parging throughout and six-pane hinged wood windows are located in the north and south walls. A brick-paved floor and large hewn ceiling joists approximately twenty-four inches on center further define the interior.

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random-width heart pine flooring, painted plaster walls and ceilings, varnished walnut tongue-and-groove-board partition walls, and painted wood trim at the staircase, door and window openings, baseboards, chair rails, and chimney facings. Two of the original doorways (south and east) feature single-leaf, four-panel wood doors with tongue-and-groove boards affixed diagonally to their interior faces for greater strength; the north entry has a six-panel wood door. Wrought-iron hardware, used to hang the original exterior doors, includes long spade-end strap hinges, handmade nails, and pintel eyelets. The north entry and all interior doorways have six-panel wood doors hung with simple butt hinges. Rimlocks of various vintages are used at all doors; some feature brass knobs while others have simpler ceramic knobs.

Marlbrook's interior is organized around a center-passage plan and features a wide stairhall the full depth of the house, onto which all the original rooms open. On the east end, the house is single-pile, with one large room the full depth of the house; on the west end the plan is double-pile, with two smaller rooms separated by a partition wall and served by corner fireplaces that share a common chimney. With access to the exterior (now the kitchen wing) through a door in the east wall, the large first-floor east room or parlor probably served as the house's principal, multifunctional entertaining and gathering room. Dominating the east wall of this large parlor is a centered fireplace with a segmentally arched opening and a multi-stage mantel with Wall-of-Troy fret moldings above a frieze with three fluted triglyphs. Above the mantelshelf is a chimney facing that consists of fluted pilasters extending to ceiling height that frame five arched-top recessed panels. The composition is crowned by a dentil cornice. This cornice extends southward along the wall, capping a built-in press that has a segmentally arched pair of three-panel doors above a chair rail, and single-panel rectangular doors below. The entire press is framed by fluted pilasters that extend from floor to ceiling. The fluted chair rail molding extends around the entire room, as does a simple baseboard.

An L-shaped staircase ascends to the second floor along the north end of the center passage. It features an open-stringer stair with attenuated turned balusters, square newel posts, walnut handrails, and classically-inspired primitive tread brackets. The spandrel area beneath the main flight of stairs incorporates a large recessed panel comprised of three horizontally laid planks, each nearly two feet wide. The center passage, like the other rooms on the first floor, has molded chair rails and baseboards.

The southwest room, used for many years as a library, is fitted with shelves surrounding the doorway from the center passage. The corner fireplace features a segmentally arched firebox opening and an ornate tripartite mantel incorporating fluted pilasters, a band-like flat molding with paired fillets, a wide frieze with two recessed panels and three pilaster-like fluted triglyphs, and a multi-stage cornice-mantelshelf with Wall-of-Troy and fillet moldings. The partition wall that

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Description (continued)

multi-stage cornice-mantelshelf with Wall-of-Troy and fillet moldings. The partition wall that divides this room from the northwest room is composed of vertical random-width beaded walnut boards, now varnished, that retain ghost marks (lath marks, nail holes) from a former plaster finish. In the adjoining northwest room, the partition wall has been treated the same way. The corner fireplace, which has a segmentally arched opening, features a less ornate mantel, with an architrave surround, three recessed panels in the wide frieze area, and a simple molded mantelshelf with one Wall-of-Troy molding. A modern doorway, modeled after the original exterior doors in the house, is located in the west wall of each of these two rooms, providing interior access to the mid-1990s wing.

On the second floor of the main block are two large bedrooms, one on each side of a center passage, and a mid-twentieth-century bathroom partitioned off from the south end of the passage. Vertical random-width beaded walnut boards partition off the bedrooms from the center passage. The east bedroom boasts an elaborate mantel very similar to that found in the first-floor southwest room. It incorporates a segmentally arched firebox opening and an ornate tripartite mantel, fluted pilasters, a cornice molding topped by a wide frieze with two recessed panels and three pilaster-like fluted triglyphs, and an upper cornice with a fillet band, a tall cove molding, and a plain top shelf. The chair rail molding features a wide fillet band as well. The brick hearth retains remnants of diamond-pattern scored stucco parging of undetermined date. Additional paneling above the mantel and paneled wardrobe closets to one side of the mantel were added in the 1940s renovation of the house. A short four-panel door to the north side of the mantel provides access (two steps down) to the garret level of the adjoining east wing. The west bedroom has a segmentally arched firebox opening with an architrave surround, a total of five simple recessed panels arranged symmetrically above and to each side of the opening, topped by a simple cove molding with a row of dentils below and a plain shelf above. As in the other bedroom, paneling from the 1940s augments the mantel above the mantelshelf; paneled wardrobe closets fill the recesses on each side of the chimney breast. The mid-twentieth-century bathroom includes a full suite of American Standard plumbing fixtures, a mosaic tiled floor, and ceramic tile wainscot beneath wallpapered upper walls.

The interior of the east wing, renovated in the 1940s, is partitioned into three spaces, including a family/dining room; a kitchen; and a breakfast room. The family/dining room, occupying the space of the formerly detached kitchen, retains some early-nineteenth-century fabric, including a large cooking fireplace with a hewn wood lintel, a stone-faced surround and lining, and cast-iron pot holders, one incised with the date 1777 and with chevron patterning. Original or early random-width pine floorboards and plain ceiling joists with double-beaded tongue-and-groove boards above them complete the list of original interior materials. During the 1940s renovations, a boxed winder stair to the garret and an under-stair half-bath were partitioned off at the west end of the space; built-in presses with glazed upper doors were installed flanking the chimney breast, and simple brackets

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Marlbrook
Rockbridge County, Va.

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were attached to the hewn lintel to support a plain mantel shelf. The infill areas of the wing accommodate the 1940s kitchen and a small breakfast/sitting room on the first floor and a bathroom, closets, and office space on the garret level.

The interior of the 1990s west wing is entirely modern, though its materials, finishes, and architectural details are based on those found in the historic portions of the house.

Outbuildings and Landscape Features

The property encompasses a number of known historic resources that complement the principal dwelling. In the house's immediate vicinity stands an antebellum-era log springhouse, the last survivor of several log buildings. The springhouse, also reputedly used as a schoolroom, is a one-story, one-room rectangular building of V-notched hewn logs with board-and-batten gable ends, extended top-plate logs, and deep roof overhangs. The interior is accessed by a wide batten door in the east end. Water from the spring at the base of the hill was pumped to the springhouse by a succession of hydraulic rams, the first installed prior to 1876, another in 1899 and a final one in the 1940s. Water to the house from the spring reservoir now arrives courtesy of an electric pump. Other log buildings on the property at one time included a detached kitchen, a barn, and a schoolhouse/office.

Near the kitchen wing is an in-ground cistern constructed in the 1870s of bricks obtained from the smokehouse that formerly stood on the property. A lattice cistern house once stood above it. According to an inscribed concrete slab, J. Lloyd Flint built the hip-roofed frame carport structure located in the yard in 1954. Contemporary with the carport is a small gable-roofed storage shed of weatherboarded frame construction. These structures replaced several small frame chickenhouses that had stood in the yard until the 1940s. The dominant agricultural building on the property is a large post-and-beam wood frame barn dating from the first quarter of the twentieth century. Its traditional form features a standing-seam-metal gable roof, board-and-batten siding, sliding doors, multi-pane wood hinged windows, and shed-roofed extensions around the perimeter of the main block. The structure is composed of sawn beams and braces secured with large metal screw-bolts; metal tie-rods span the large open interior.

Located just south of the barn, accessed by an extension of the main driveway, are two buildings erected by Glasgow builder Dick Brown in 1945 for the use of the tenants that helped farm the property. The tenant house is a simple one-story aluminum-sided frame dwelling on a poured-concrete foundation, featuring double-hung wood windows and a shed-roofed front porch. Across the driveway from the house is the workshop, which originally also served as a garage. The frame building is

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Marlbrook
Rockbridge County, Va.

Description (continued)

weatherboarded, stands on a tile-block foundation, and is covered by a shed roof with exposed rafter ends.

The four parcels that make up the nominated property include not only the house tract, upon which all the above-ground resources detailed in the preceding paragraphs are located, but three additional adjoining parcels to the north, across Forge Road (SR 608). This additional acreage, historically associated with the house tract since the Greenlees' occupation, is presently undeveloped except as managed farm and timber lands. A small limestone quarry, the source of the building material used for the house's foundation, is situated within this acreage, near the ridge line in an area screened from view by thick forest growth.

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Marlbrook
Rockbridge County, Va.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

Marlbrook, located in Rockbridge County, Virginia, is the Georgian-style home of David Greenlee and his family, including his mother, pioneer county settler Mary McDowell Greenlee. The evolution of the two-story brick house, originally known as Cherry Hill, is believed to have begun in the 1790s, and its architecturally refined interior includes late Georgian paneled chimney facings and mantels. Marlbrook is one of only a small group of eighteenth-century houses in the region to have had such fine interior appointments. The house also exhibits a non-standard center-passage floor plan--single-pile on one end and double-pile on the other. A log springhouse, a barn, and a tenant house are among the other resources on the property. The property passed through the Hyde and Thompson families before it was acquired by Virginia Military Institute pharmacist J. Fulton Tompkins in 1875. In 1941 the property was acquired by Tompkins' granddaughter Sallie T. Locher, who rehabilitated the house for her personal use in the 1940s. Marlbrook remains in the ownership of the Tompkins family.

Applicable Criteria

Marlbrook is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C in the area of Architecture at the local level of significance. One of the county's earliest gentry dwellings, Marlbrook is a well-preserved example of a late Georgian house with refined interior woodwork and the additional distinction of an unusual floor plan. The property's period of significance extends from the apparent date of construction of the house in the 1790s until 1952, encompassing the architectural evolution of the house and accompanying resources while owned by various members of the Greenlee, Thompson, and Tompkins families. Information in support of designation appears throughout the historic context.

Acknowledgments

A number of individuals and organizations assisted in the preparation of this report. Foremost among these was the nomination's sponsor, George J. Tompkins, brother of the property's most recent owner, Sallie Tompkins Locher Koontz Letcher, and executor of her estate. Others who provided assistance included members of the Ruth Anderson McCulloch Branch of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities; Lisa McCown, Librarian with the Special Collections, Leyburn Library, Washington & Lee University, Lexington, Virginia; and Calder Loth, Quatro Hubbard, Mike Pulice, John Kern, June Ellis, and Marc Wagner of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

Historic Background

Marlbrook's Georgian detail supports evidence that it was built in the late eighteenth century for then-owner of the property, David Greenlee (d. 1820). In the 1930s historian James W. McClung suggested a date of construction of about 1790, and writing during the same period historian and physician E. P. Tompkins, a resident of the house in the late nineteenth century, suggested a date of construction in the late 1790s. The property on which the house stands was patented to Thomas Williams, who acquired a

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Marlbrook
Rockbridge County, Va.

400-acre tract "on a branch in [the] Forks of James River" in 1749. Williams sold the tract to James Greenlee (d. 1763) in 1752. Greenlee's wife, Mary Elizabeth McDowell Greenlee (1707-1809), was the first white woman to settle in the Borden large tract of Rockbridge County in 1737. Of Mary Greenlee historian Oren F. Morton has written: "In all the annals of Rockbridge there is no individual of more striking personality." She managed her late husband's estate, which included six slaves, and she kept a tavern. She was said to have a "caustic tongue," according to Morton, and there is a legend that it nearly got her charged with witchcraft. James and Mary Greenlee's son David acquired the 400-acre tract in 1763, and Mary Greenlee is believed to have lived in the present house with her son and daughter-in-law Jane Greenlee (d. 1800) during her final years. The house was originally known as Cherry Hill.¹

Tax records are inconclusive as to the construction date of the house, but a wing has bricks carved with the initials D.G. and the date June 12, 1804, indicating that the main section of the house is earlier or at least completed by that date. At the time of David Greenlee's death in 1820, according to county tax records, he owned 569 acres with buildings valued at \$1,000, and the inventory of his estate enumerates eight slaves. Thirty-eight sheep, nineteen hogs, numerous horses and cattle, and crops of wheat, rye, barley, oats and corn were raised on the farm. The presence of "10 still vessels" suggests Greenlee operated a distillery, as did many farmers of the period. The property in 1820 is thought to have included two log houses that Greenlee built for his daughters. After James Greenlee's death the property was purchased by the administrator of his estate, Cyrus Hyde. Hyde sold the property to William Thompson in 1832.²

William Thompson (ca. 1783-1855), who occupied Marlbrook with his wife Nancy B. Thompson, operated a grist mill on the property (no longer extant). The 1850 census lists Thompson as a farmer and possessor of \$20,000 in real estate and fourteen slaves. His household at the time included his wife Nancy, their children Lucian H., Sarah C., and William J., and two boarders--Laurence Gibbons, an

¹ McClung, *Historical Significance of Rockbridge County*, 226-228; Morton, *History of Rockbridge County*, 254-255; Tompkins, "House that David Built," 1, 14, 20; and Augusta County Deed Book 4, p. 247, and Deed Book 11, p. 189. According to Morton, Mary Greenlee moved to a house at Greenlee's Ferry on the James River in 1780, so her residence at Marlbrook would have been after that date. After Jane Greenlee's death, David married a widow named Mrs. Hunter (Tompkins, "House that David Built," 14). E. P. Tompkins appears to be the source of a tradition that Mary Greenlee assisted in the construction of the house by carrying bricks (while about ninety years of age), and of Marlbrook's distinction as one of the "Seven Hills" of Rockbridge County, that is, as one of seven houses in the Natural Bridge area with names ending in "hill" (Tompkins, "House that David Built," 8-9; Tompkins and Davis, *The Natural Bridge and its Historical Surroundings*, 124).

² Rockbridge County tax records; Rockbridge County Will Book 5, p. 489; Rockbridge County Deed Book N, pp. 9, 10, 11, 155, 316 and 319, and Deed Book R, p. 426; Morton, *History of Rockbridge County*, 254-255; and Tompkins, "House that David Built," 13, 14, 15, 17.

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Irish-born stonecutter, and Michael Maher(?), who appears also to have been an Irish stonecutter. The stonecutters may have been employed by the James River and Kanawha Canal, which was under construction along the James River during the period. The Marlbrook farm was managed during William Thompson's later years and after his death by his eldest son, Lucian.³

After Thompson's death the property became the subject of litigation. In 1881 it was deeded to J. F. Tompkins in the name of his wife Sallie D. Tompkins. John Fulton Tompkins (1830-99), who married Sallie Dudley Ragland Pendleton in 1867, served from 1871 to 1876 as the pharmacist at Virginia Military Institute in Lexington. According to his son and biographer E. Pendleton Tompkins (1868-1952), J. F. Tompkins actually acquired Marlbrook--the name he gave to the property--in 1875, and he and his wife and family moved there in October 1876. E. P. Tompkins was eight years old in 1876, and in later life he described Marlbrook as his family found it:

"At that time the house was much out of repair; there [were], for outbuildings, only a brick smoke-house (much tumbled-down), the log kitchen--which when repaired my father called "The Office", and the barn, with corncrib and granary. The yard was unfenced, all the roofs leaked, the hydraulic ram was hopelessly worn out (it had brought water to the log spring-house, which later became a schoolroom), so that water must be hauled in a barrel on a sled."

Tompkins made improvements to the property including repairing the house foundation and adding porches as well as building a cistern (lined with brick from the old smokehouse), chickenhouses, and a granary. In addition to his work as a pharmacist Tompkins was skilled in dentistry and anesthesiology. He made a profitable business running the grist mill on the property and he was a founder of and lay preacher at Trinity Episcopal Church in Natural Bridge. He conducted Sunday school classes and services at the Oak Forest School, a log schoolhouse located on the edge of the farm (no longer extant). Tompkins was elected a magistrate and he is said to have performed his duties on the front porch of the house in the summer and in a log building in the yard in the winter (probably the building known as the Office, which no longer stands).⁴

J.F. Tompkins' son E. P. practiced medicine at the farm from 1897 to 1903. In 1897 he built a frame wing off the west end of the house to serve as his office and bedroom. The wing, dimensions of which are suggested in a 1930s photo that reveal a ghost mark on the west gable end, once stood on the site of

³ Tompkins, "House that David Built," 17-18; U.S. census.

⁴ McClung, *Historical Significance of Rockbridge County*, 227; Tompkins, Biography of John Fulton Tompkins; Tompkins, "Some Recollections of My Father John Fulton Tompkins;" and Tompkins, "House that David Built," 19-22.

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the current mid-1990s wing). E. P. Tompkins also managed the farm during the period; later W. Morton McNutt, the husband of E. P.'s sister Louise, rented the farm. McNutt purchased the property after the death of Sallie D. Tompkins about 1919. He served a two-year term in the Virginia legislature and was also a Commissioner of Revenue for the Natural Bridge District. In 1941, a year after McNutt's death, the property was acquired by Sallie Tompkins Locher, a granddaughter of J. F. and Sallie Tompkins. In the 1940s Sallie Locher undertook numerous renovations to the house, augmenting existing woodwork with Colonial Revival paneling, stripping plaster from walnut-board partition walls, remodeling the kitchen wing, installing bathrooms and a modern kitchen, and removing the late-nineteenth-century porches installed by her grandparents. In subsequent years Sallie (later Koontz, then Letcher after remarrying) also attempted the reassembly of the Greenlee lands adjoining the house tract, as the properties became available. The 123.33-acre nominated property includes the bulk of the Greenlee acreage that she was able to collect over nearly sixty years. To help finance her rehabilitation work at Marlbrook, Sallie Locher Koontz Letcher with her brother George J. Tompkins had a construction business; together they built or rebuilt approximately one hundred FHA houses in the region. Sallie also farmed the Marlbrook property, and in 1945 she hired Glasgow builder Dick Brown to build the tenant house and an adjoining workshop/garage on the farm near the large frame barn. The most recent improvement to the property is a mid-1990s frame addition to the house's west end, designed for Sallie Letcher by Staunton architect Doug Roller. The addition was built over the course of two years by Fred Fainter, the farm's caretaker and current occupant of the tenant house. Following Sallie Letcher's death in April 2000, the estate was placed in the care of her executor George J. Tompkins and is now for sale.⁵

Architectural Analysis

Marlbrook is one of a handful of refined late-eighteenth-century brick and stone dwellings in the southern Rockbridge area that reflect, in the high quality of their design and workmanship, the growing prosperity and sophistication of the region's builders and property owners. Houses of this vintage were typically built principally of materials obtained on or near the property they occupied; bricks for walls would have been made with local clay, burned in kilns fueled by timber cut from the land; stone foundations used locally quarried limestones; and interior walls, structural members, flooring, and trimwork were derived from hardwoods and virgin timber felled and sawn on the property, and hand-planed and -carved on-site by a master carpenter or joiner. While the reliance on local materials was a hallmark of dwellings from the earliest periods of settlement, the manipulation of those materials into

⁵ McClung, *Historical Significance of Rockbridge County*, 227-228; Tompkins, "House that David Built," 22-24; and George J. Tompkins personal communication. E. Pendleton Tompkins was a founder of the Rockbridge Historical Society and a chairman of the local branch of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (*Lexington Gazette*, May 28, 1952).

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graceful compositions with classical proportions and detailing became a hallmark of gentry-built dwellings in the region only in the final decades of the eighteenth century.

Following closely upon the construction of the county's first brick courthouse in the 1780s, brick (and less frequently stone) began to supplant log or frame as the construction material of choice for the substantial dwellings of well-to-do landowners. The Alexander-Withrow House in Lexington, built in 1789 for William Alexander as his store and residence, is a well-known example in an urban setting. The 1790s was a period of rapid development of impressive masonry dwellings in the Rockbridge area; several of these houses also exhibit interesting late Georgian-style interiors. According to architectural historian Pamela H. Simpson, Rockbridge area houses Thorn Hill (begun 1792), Halfway House (ca. 1795), and Mulberry Hill (circa 1801), "possess extraordinarily ornate interiors . . . with fully paneled overmantels, elaborately carved mantels, broken scroll pediments over the doors, and finely detailed dentil cornices." Thorn Hill's interior woodwork, nominally Georgian in character, demonstrates a "naïve sense of proportion and detailing [that] give it a fantastic quality" and mark it as "the work of an uneducated but highly skilled joiner with an entertaining sense of design." A small group of less elaborately or idiosyncratically ornamented late Georgian dwellings that share many of the same details, David Greenlee's Cherry Hill among them, were also built during this period.⁶

Marlbrook is notable not only for its late Georgian interiors, but for its adoption of a non-standard center-passage plan. Typically, dwellings organized with a center-passage plan are either single-pile (one room deep) or double-pile (two rooms deep). Marlbrook combines the two concepts, with a single large room on the east side of the center passage and a pair of smaller rooms on the west side. While this variation is atypical, it is not a unique or singular form; one of the best-known Virginia examples of this plan is the older (circa 1770) two-story section of Gadsby's Tavern in Alexandria.

⁶ Lyle and Simpson, *The Architecture of Historic Lexington*, 13; Upton and Peters, "Thorn Hill," National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form, sections 7 and 8.

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA (continued)

UTM References (continued):

	Zone	Easting	Northing
5.	17	632470	4167470

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated parcel includes four contiguous parcels (107-6-1B, 107-6-2B, 107-6-1A3, and 107-6-1A3B) totaling 123.33 acres, as depicted on the enclosed sketch map of the property. The sketch map is derived from Rockbridge County tax maps 106 and 107.

Boundary Justification

The area nominated for listing encompasses the current legal boundaries of the remaining 123.33-acre core of contiguous lands currently and historically associated with the dwelling known as Marlbrook. The boundary includes sufficient surrounding acreage to emphasize the rural agricultural character of the dwelling's historic setting.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

All photographs are of:

MARLBROOK

Forge Road, Rockbridge County, Virginia

DHR file number: 081-0009

DHR negative number: 17453

Leslie A. Giles, photographer

Date: August 2001

All negatives are stored at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond.

VIEW OF: front elevation, main house; view facing south
PHOTO 1 of 9

VIEW OF: general view of property; view facing southeast
PHOTO 2 of 9

VIEW OF: first floor stairway; view facing northeast
PHOTO 3 of 9

VIEW OF: first floor east room (parlor)
PHOTO 4 of 9

VIEW OF: first floor southwest room (library)
PHOTO 5 of 9

VIEW OF: first floor northwest room
PHOTO 6 of 9

VIEW OF: second floor east room (mantel detail)
PHOTO 7 of 9

VIEW OF: second floor west room (mantel detail)
PHOTO 8 of 9

VIEW OF: log spring house, view facing southwest
PHOTO 9 of 9

Marlbrook

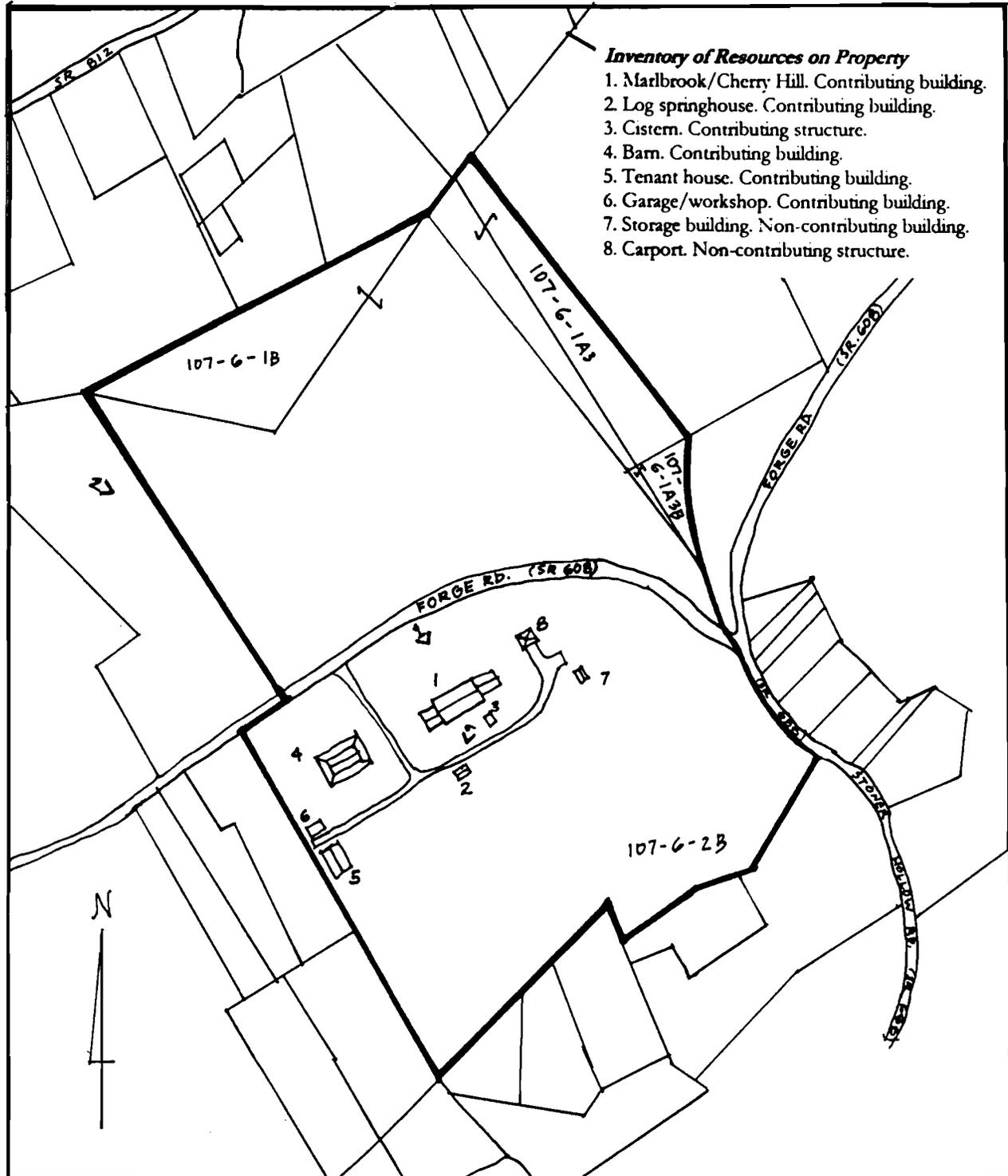
Rockbridge County, Virginia

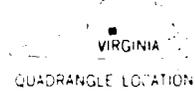
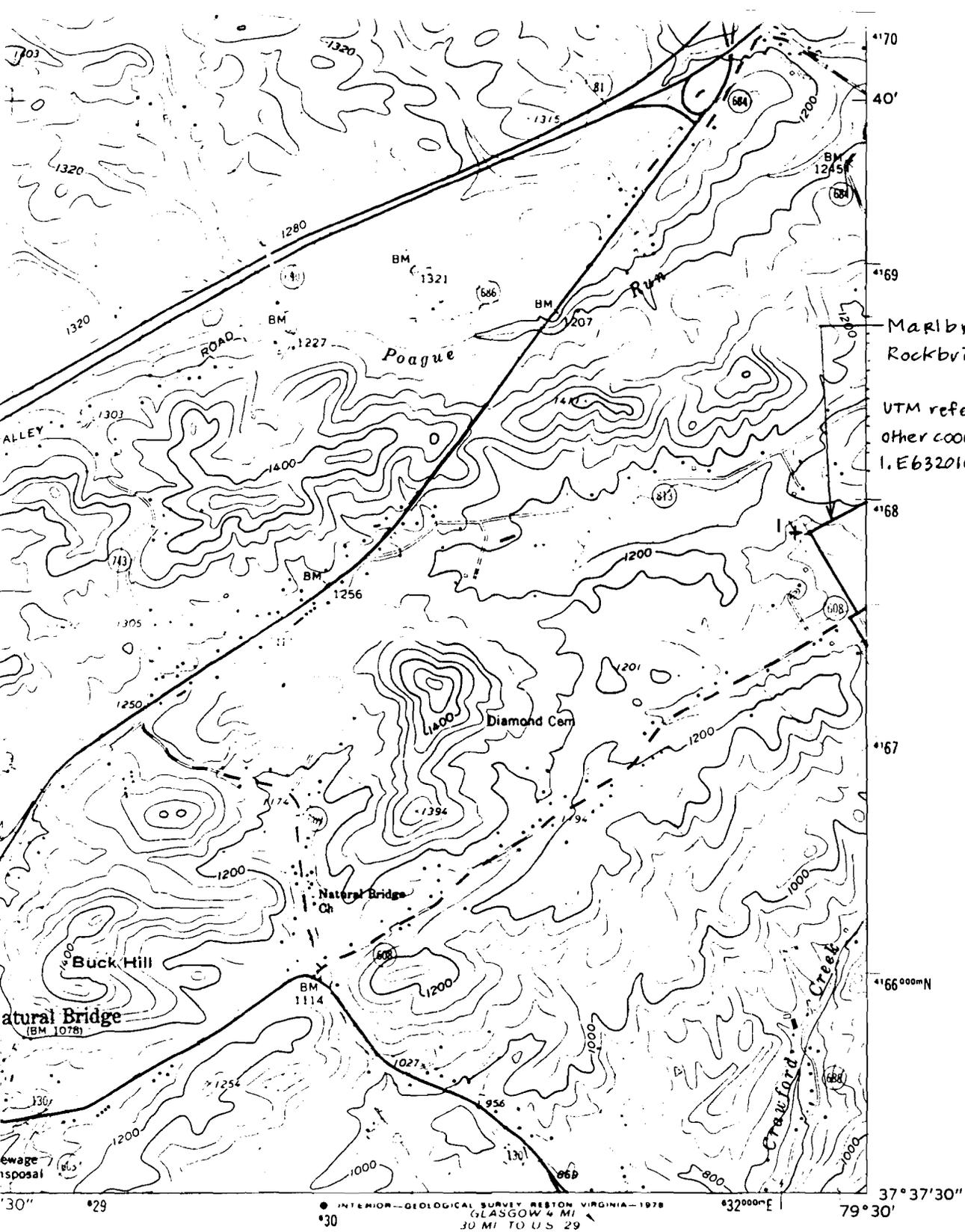
Sketch map of property (not to scale).

Resource locations are approximate.

Derived from Rockbridge County tax maps 106 and 107.

Numbered pointers reference exterior photographic views.





NATURAL BRIDGE, VA.

N3737.5—W7930/7.5

1961

PHOTOREVISED 1978

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(SNOWDEN)
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