

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Chapel Hill

other names/site number DHR ID # 081-0521

2. Location

street & number 68 Charming Lane N/A not for publication

city or town Lexington vicinity

state Virginia code VA county Rockbridge code 163

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

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

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

 national statewide X local

M. Carr
Signature of certifying official

April 21, 2011
Date

Deputy Director + Deputy SHPO
Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	district
1	0	site
1	0	structure
0	0	object
3	0	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)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

DOMESTIC: secondary structure

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Federal

Greek Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Stone

walls: Brick

roof: Metal

other: Wood, Glass

Narrative Description

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

Summary Paragraph

Chapel Hill, located in central-eastern Rockbridge County, Virginia, is a two-story Federal-style brick house constructed ca. 1842 for Henry and Sarah Amole. The east-facing house stands at just over 1,000 feet in elevation above branches of Mill Creek that flow into the Maury River, a tributary of the James River. The house is located on a hillside overlooking Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church, which stands nearby on an adjacent parcel to the east, and has views of the Blue Ridge beyond. Chapel Hill has a five-bay façade with Flemish-bond front and gable end elevations and an American-bond rear elevation above a limestone raised basement. The front and rear elevations are crowned by molded cyma recta brick cornices below a metal-sheathed side-gable roof. The one-story front porch dates to the early to mid-twentieth century and shelters a front entry with a basket-handle arched fanlight. A lower ca. 1910 two-story wing with a brick first story and weatherboard-sided second story extends to the rear (this wing or ell is also referred to as an addition throughout the text, as opposed to the ca. 1842 original section). The interior has a one-room-deep center-passage plan with plaster walls and ceilings and wood floors. The four original mantels are basically Federal and Greek Revival in inspiration and are notable for their exaggerated vernacular character. The dirt-floored basement has a fireplace with an unusual rounded stone hearth. The house is accompanied by a limestone chimney with front-to-back fireplaces, probably a remnant of a summer kitchen and possible slave quarter, and the ruins of a timber frame bank barn. A modern shed stands in back yard just outside the nomination boundary. Large Kentucky coffee trees and other deciduous trees from the historic period shade the lawn. The property beyond the lawn is mostly pasture with a few woodlots. The approximately 2.3-acre nominated area focuses on the house and associated historic resources and excludes most of the present property.

Narrative Description

House Exterior

In historic times, Chapel Hill's brickwork was apparently painted with a red wash and its mortar joints pencilled white. Today this treatment is best preserved on the wall surface under the front porch. Another well preserved patch of red wash appears at the bottom front corner of the south gable end, perhaps where a cistern cap or other construction once stood and covered the brickwork with the wash. There are illegible graffiti written in pencil on some of the mortar joints under the porch. A faint white mark on a brick in the front entry fanlight arch may be an A, possibly part of a once longer painted inscription reading "Amole," although it may also be a random paint splatter. Scratched on a brick at the base of the south chimney is a faint inscription that appears to read "Amo--".

The brickwork has numerous scaffold holes that are plugged with old bricks. The first story of the ca. 1910 rear addition is brick, laid in American bond, but is more crudely constructed than the original house. Like the original house, it too preserves traces of a wash and penciling, as well as evidence suggesting it was constructed with reused bricks, possibly from a brick structure (presumably a smoke house) that stood closely adjacent until it was demolished around 1900. The second story of the addition is of light nailed frame construction with weatherboard siding attached with wire nails. The chimneys on the two gable ends of the ca. 1842 section extend slightly on the exterior. They have stepped shoulders and possibly reworked modest corbelling at the top. The ca. 1910 wing has an interior brick flue with a cap above the roof that was rebuilt in recent decades. Near the middle of the ca. 1842 rear elevation are stucco patches, roofing asphalt, and discolorations associated with a two-tier porch that once ran along the south side of the ca. 1910 wing. Both the original section of the

house and the wing have coursed limestone foundations. Mounted on the ridges of both the main house and rear wing gable roofs are decorative early-twentieth-century metal lightning arrestors, one with a wind vane and a textured purple glass globe. There are twentieth-century half-round metal gutters and full-round metal downspouts.

The current wood-sash 2/2 windows were installed in the original house window openings around the turn of the twentieth century, presumably at or around the same time as the construction of the addition, which has the same windows. Historic photos and surviving hardware indicate that the east (front) windows had louvered wood shutters. There is a six-pane landing window on the rear elevation of the original house that may have been altered (made smaller in size) when the rear addition porch was built adjacent to it. The windows in the brick sections have simple molded surrounds that are recessed back from the surface of the brick. At the center of the second-story front elevation over the porch is a doorway, in existence in the early twentieth century, with a panel door which was made inoperable and a window pane crudely inserted in it in recent decades. The doorway formerly opened onto the roof of the front porch, which once had a wooden roof balustrade. The north side of the ca. 1910 wing has a second-story window opening from which the sashes have been removed and a board painted to look like a 2/2 window inserted. There are three basement windows on the east (front) side. Two are visible on the exterior and have modern two-pane window sashes crudely inserted. The third, located under the porch, has only a makeshift covering constructed of old shutter leaves. The left-hand basement window was formerly a doorway. The original house has two small squarish openings that flank the chimney in each gable. The north openings are boarded over and the south openings have louvered wood vents. At the bottom of the south gable end are original tall louvered vents with square-section wood bars that formerly ventilated the south basement room (they are now filled with insulation on the inside). What may have been a similar vent on the north end was infilled with stone and brick a hundred years ago or more.

The front entry has a basket-handle arched fanlight, reeded and paneled reveals, sidelights, a five-panel door, and a modern storm door. The fanlight has radial muntins and under it is a band of rectangular panels. The opposite rear entry has a molded surround with turned corner blocks, a paneled reveal, and a five-panel door. The ca. 1910 wing has four first-story entries, two with mid- to late-twentieth-century wood or wood and glass panel doors and two with reused six-panel doors. The wing also has a second-story entry with a batten door constructed of narrow beaded tongue-and-groove boards. A second second-story entry on the same south side of the wing has been boarded over, probably ca. 1980, although its batten door survives on the interior. The basement has a front entry with a reused six-panel door, hung upside down, that bears traces of former paint, including faded panel graining.

Some evidence suggests the house originally had a one-story porch that extended the same length as the current porch, which was added around the turn of the twentieth century, although a smaller entry-only porch is also possible. The front porch has a shallow-pitched, metal-sheathed hip roof with small eaves brackets and the sawed off tops of former turned posts. The present porch supports, which are square wood posts with molded caps, are Colonial Revival-influenced elements dating to the twentieth century, probably the second quarter of the century. Between the posts span wood balustrades with rectangular balusters. The balustrades appear to be the same as ones shown in early-twentieth-century photographs. Other features include an exposed roof structure with beaded tongue-and-groove roof decking visible above, modern tongue-and-groove floor boards, modern wooden front steps with simple dimensional lumber handrails, and a modern vinyl underpinning that conceals modern treated wood foundation posts. The present steps, although modern, descend to a long limestone footer stone that is historic.

On the north side of the ca. 1910 wing is a one-story shed porch with a roof structure dating to the early twentieth century and modern posts, flooring, and foundation posts below. The porch was not original to the addition but was apparently added within several decades of its construction. Its roof appears to have been reused from another context. On the wing's south side is a modern wood deck with a dimensional lumber

railing. From it rises an exterior wood stair to a deck-like landing at the addition's second-story entry. These deteriorated modern features replace a ca. 1910 double-tier porch that was removed ca. 1980.

House Interior

Walls of plaster on split lath or brick are typical in the original section. The ca. 1910 wing has plaster on brick outer walls on the first floor. The plaster is damaged or missing in places, and virtually all finishes show imperfections and sloppy repairs. There are holes or crudely patched holes for stove pipes above some fireplaces. Virtually all walls are painted, although there are remnants of mostly twentieth-century wallpaper on the second floor of the rear addition. Other walls in the addition are constructed of or sheathed with boards, such as the studless board partitions that separate the two rooms on each floor. The partition between the two upstairs addition rooms, which is reinforced by a cross batten, has had sections of its upper boards removed, presumably a change made in recent years to aid in heating the rooms. A modern bathroom was created in the second-floor center passage by the addition of a drywall partition.

The original section has plaster on lath ceilings and the addition has beaded tongue-and-groove ceilings. The ceiling boards in the main second-floor room of the addition have a subtly striped appearance that may be the result of different coloration of the boards showing through the paint. The two-run stair in the center passage has turned newels and balusters, a molded hand rail, onion-form pendants under the upper newels, cyma recta profile tread brackets, and a paneled spandrel. All stair elements are painted wood. Some missing balusters are stored in an under-stair closet. The closet, which was originally the top of a stair to the basement, is accessed through a six-panel door and contains crude wood shelves.

The four original wooden mantels are Federal, Greek Revival, or transitional Federal-Greek Revival in character. The parlor (first-floor south room) mantel features paired colonnette pilasters, large console brackets with overscaled reeding, three frieze panels with unusual paterae or sunbursts formed of turned petal-like elements, and possible traces of early rose paint on the pilasters. The upstairs north room mantel is likewise vernacular in interpretation, with frieze and pilaster panels filled with a grate-like pattern of molding strips that may have been intended to evoke fluting. The upstairs south room mantel features attenuated triangular pilaster/brackets and side and frieze panels and the dining room (first-floor north room) mantel is formed by an arrangement of panels in a molded outer frame. This last mantel has a much reworked brick fireplace surround with one or possibly two brick infillings. The parlor fireplace, which has deteriorated brickwork and a sheet iron fireback, was constructed on the Rumford principle. Its raised brick hearth is modern. The upstairs fireplaces have been walled up and their hearths removed. The spaces left by the hearths have been patched with tongue-and-groove boards. The flue of the ca. 1910 wing, which served stoves, has painted brickwork.

Six-panel doors on butt hinges are standard in the original section. Mounted on the inside of the five-panel front door is a ca. 1900 door bell mechanism and inside it is visible the former grained finish of the door. The door is hung on decorative ca. 1900 hinges. First-floor door and window openings in the original section and addition have mostly molded surrounds with turned corner blocks. The second-floor door and window surrounds tend to be plainer. The front entry, which has molded trim without corner blocks, has a reeded band under the fanlight. The parlor and dining room have paneled wainscots; other rooms have chair rails. Several rooms have full or partial height presses and cupboards with paneled doors next to the chimney breasts. These are of pegged and hand-planed construction suggesting they are original to ca. 1842. Some have ca. 1900 hardware and most have small butt hinges stamped "Baldwin" and "Patent". The cupboards in the dining room have traces of graining like that on the front entry door, and on the inner surfaces of their door leaves are graffiti written in pencil with names and dates from the 1920s period. There are simple molded baseboards in the original section and plain baseboards in the addition. Since the construction of the addition about 1910, its first-floor end room has functioned as a kitchen. The present kitchen cabinets and cupboards, which have had their doors and other features removed, date to the late twentieth century.

The dirt-floored basement extends only under the original house. It has exposed limestone walls (the inside of the foundation) capped with brick masonry (the inside of the lowest part of the brick walls) and is divided into two rooms by an American-bond brick partition. There are traces of whitewash and white paint on the stone- and brickwork and on the exposed machine vertical-sawn joists of the floor above. The north room has a chimney breast constructed mostly of brick but with the right-hand quarter constructed of stone. Set into the brick is a fireplace with an iron lintel, and at the foot of the fireplace is an unusual rounded stone hearth. The roof space over the addition is unfinished and was never used. The attic over the ca. 1842 is accessed through a small opening near the second-floor bathroom. It too was presumably never used due to the difficulty of access. The roof structure over the ca. 1842 section is presumably original as its rafters are pegged at the top and carved with Roman numeral builder's marks.

Associated Resources

Off the north side of the house, at the edge of a drop off, stands a coursed limestone chimney with front-to-back fireplaces, probably a remnant of a summer kitchen and possible slave quarter. Traces of plaster and whitewash survive on the chimney; on the south face the plaster and whitewash begin about four feet above the former floor surface, suggesting the former presence of a wainscot or an original built in between the chimney and the building's no-longer-extant south (front) elevation wall. The plaster and whitewash extend to near the former floor level on the opposite north face of the chimney, suggesting communication between the building's two rooms on that side. The chimney retains virtually all of its original stones, although its hearth stones are dilapidated, the fireplace lintel stones are cracked, much outer mortar is gone, and some stones are missing from the top (these missing stones appear to lie near the chimney). Above each fireplace are stove flue holes that may be original to the building. Crude cement repairs have been made to the north side, probably within the past fifty years. At points adjacent to the chimney are stones that may represent corner footers for the former rectangular building.

To the south of the house are the ruins of a bank barn. The ruins consist of sawn and hewn timbers with mortises for former structural joints, a collapsed metal-sheathed roof, and the stone retaining wall of the barn's banked upslope (north) elevation. Bricks that are similar to the ones that plug the scaffold holes of the house are associated with the base of the barn's ramp (possibly they were bricks left over from the construction of the house or adjacent Wesley Chapel used as fill under the ramp). A few pieces of the barn have been salvaged and stored in the house for possible reuse. These include the iron rail and decorative cast iron rail hangers of the former upper-level barn doors. The hangers were fastened to the wood siding with large wire nails, possibly an indication the barn was built around the time the farm passed from the Amole family to the Rees family (ancestors of the present owner) in 1898. Upslope from the barn ruins, on the opposite side of a lane that passed in front of the barn, is a depression in the hillside that may represent the location of a former cellar or ice house. (The location of this depression is shown in a 1906 photograph but it is unclear whether a structure is present.)

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

Period of Significance

Ca. 1842-ca. 1910

Significant Dates

Ca. 1842

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Period of Significance (justification)

Chapel Hill's period of significance begins with the period of original construction, which tax evidence suggests is ca. 1842 (a date supported by the architectural evidence), and extends to include the ca. 1910 date of construction of a rear wing.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary):

N/A

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

Chapel Hill, a Federal and Greek Revival brick house located in Rockbridge County, Virginia, was built ca. 1842 for wheat fan manufacturer and farmer Henry Amole and his wife, Sarah (Holmes) Amole. The property is significant for its highly unusual vernacular mantels and other features such as a finely crafted front entry surround, molded brick cornices, and a stone chimney from a former outbuilding. In 1898 the house was acquired by the Rees family, who added a rear wing ca. 1910, and the property remains in the ownership of a family descendant. Chapel Hill is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C: architecture at the local level of significance.

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

Henry Amole (1795-1875) was a son of Jacob Amole (d. 1845) who moved to Rockbridge County from Pennsylvania and purchased a hundred acres in the vicinity of the present house in the late 1790s. Henry Amole, apparently in partnership with his brother Joseph Amole (1794-1853), manufactured wheat fans, hand-cranked devices used to separate wheat from chaff. Also known as fanning mills, fanners, finishing fanners, and winnowing machines, simple versions of the devices were in use in China as early as the fourteenth century and were independently developed by Scottish farmer Andrew Rodger in 1737. The design of most machines used a fan in the form of a paddle wheel to blow the loosened chaff off of threshed grain. The grain was poured into the fan case through a hopper and in most models it passed through a sieve-like riddle before being collected. According to a biography of Henry Amole's son T. F. Amole, published in *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia* (1884), Henry Amole "engaged in the manufacture of wheat fans, the first made in this part of the country."¹

Advertisements in 1820s issues of the Lexington *Intelligencer* newspaper detail aspects of the Amoles' operation. An advertisement that ran first in the August 9, 1823, issue reads: "The subscriber offers for sale . . . Wheat Fans, warranted to be of superiour quality. Persons desirous of purchasing will apply to Mr. Jacob Haughawout of Lexington, where there are some left for sale, or to the subscriber near the Boat Yard Mills. Joseph Emole." (The Emole spelling is not attested in other sources and is likely an error of the compositor.) Beginning in the July 20, 1826, issue a similar advertisement ran: "Wheat Fans will be sold at public auction before the Eagle Tavern in Lexington on Monday the 31st instant, it being the first day of the August Court, several First Rate Wheat Fans . . . They are warranted first rate and have Cast Iron Cog Wheels. Henry Amole." The 1884 account suggests the Amoles' principal marketing focus was Rockbridge County and presumably adjacent areas in the upper Shenandoah Valley, a burgeoning grain region that they were well situated to serve.

Henry and Joseph Amole were not listed as manufacturers in the industrial censuses of 1850, 1860, and 1870, suggesting their wheat fan business had ceased by the third quarter of the century (although other reasons are possible). Henry Amole was listed in the 1830 and 1840 censuses but details on his wheat fan business were not given. He was listed as a farmer in the 1850 census. Nevertheless, the newspaper advertisements confirm the 1884 account of Amole's manufacturing activities. The period when Henry and Joseph Amole are known to have operated during the 1820s was one when locally produced iron was readily available for cog wheels and other machinery components. Buffalo Forge, located at the mouth of Buffalo Creek, and the Bath Iron Works upstream on the Maury River near Goshen, both subjects of Charles B. Dew's acclaimed history *Bond of Iron* (1994), were the major iron production sites in Rockbridge County during the mid- to late 1820s. It is possible the Amoles had their cog wheels cast at one of these local manufactories, however a search of a small portion of the voluminous records related to William Weaver, who owned Buffalo Forge and the Bath Iron Works, has

failed to turn up references to the Amole wheat fan business. Another potential source would have been the Jordan family iron furnaces.²

The Amoles manufactured their wheat fans during a period of innovation in the design of the machines. For example, in the 1820s a Mr. Meyers of Georgetown, Maryland, devised a wheat fan which “turned with great comparative ease, and had a motion communicated both to the screen and the riddle by the same turn of the handle.” Meyers exhibited his wheat fan at the Fredericksburg [Virginia] Agricultural Show, promoted as the First Virginia Agricultural Show, held in November 1822. The ease with which improved versions of wheat fans could be operated appears to have been a theme during the period and may explain the Amoles’ wish to emphasize their use of cast iron cog wheels, an important part of the cranking mechanism. The local enterprise demonstrated by the Amoles recalls another Rockbridge County farm machinery initiative of the era, Cyrus McCormick’s perfection of the reaper in the 1830s. Like the Amoles, McCormick exhibited his machine on Main Street in downtown Lexington, and during the early years he relied on a local market. It may be that the Amoles’ use of newspaper advertising during the 1820s was an inspiration for McCormick’s promotional activities in the following decade.³

Advertisements placed in 1835 issues of the Lexington *Union* newspaper offer additional insights into Henry Amole’s industrial activities. In the June 19 issue Amole advertised: “Notice to Blacksmiths. I wish to employ two first rate Blacksmiths on the shares, a man of family would be preferred. A person of steady, industrious habits, would do well at this place, five miles south of Lexington Rockbridge County VA. Application to be made before the first of September next.” The advertisement suggests Amole was scaling up his operation in order to fulfill a large contract. If so, a likely impetus would have been the construction of the James River and Kanawha Canal. On May 25, 1835, less than a month before Amole’s advertisement, the James River and Kanawha Company was organized to complete the section of the canal between Richmond and Lynchburg. Although actual construction work did not commence at this early date, presumably the region’s entrepreneurs began to prepare themselves to contribute to the effort. Individuals with mechanical expertise were solicited; in 1836 the canal company advertised in the *American Railroad Journal* for proposals from “mechanics, well recommended, desirous of immediate employment” for the construction of locks, culverts, and other canal works. In 1838 the *Lexington Gazette* urged local entrepreneurs to contribute to the construction of the canal by profiling the hydraulic cement mill of David Edmondson, located about a mile from Chapel Hill on the Maury River at the mouth of Mill Creek. In his June 19 advertisement Amole added, “Also for sale at the same place, two first rate wagons. A one and a two horse wagon, ready ironed and finished, which I would sell low for cash.” The wording suggests the wagons were made in Amole’s workshop.⁴

In July 1835 Amole ran his blacksmith advertisement again but added that prospective smiths would be employed at his “Tilthammer Shop.” A tilt hammer was a large mechanized hammer generally operated by water power and used in this instance for iron forging. Presumably the tilt hammer was a new feature of Amole’s shop (although he may simply have failed to mention it in his earlier advertisement), and if so it is additional evidence of a desire to equip himself to undertake heavy ironwork such as was needed for canal lock hinges and such. Two other navigation-related interpretations may be offered to explain Amole’s actions. Perhaps he saw the canal as an opportunity to expand his customer base for wheat fans and other products eastward into the Piedmont, although he must have known that completion of the canal to Lynchburg would be some years in the future (in 1840 as it turned out). Another possibility is that he was engaged in boat building—a boat yard was located nearby at the mouth of Buffalo Creek on the Maury River, although the years of its operation are uncertain.⁵

Amole’s tilt hammer most likely required water power, which in turn suggests his shop was located on a stream with sufficient flow and fall to operate the machinery. The creek that flows past Chapel Hill, known as Mill

Creek, may have served, or perhaps Amole's shop was associated with Edmondson's Mill. The area between Chapel Hill/Wesley Chapel and Edmondson's Mill is labeled "Mechanicsville" on the 1883 Carmichael county map. The Hartsook blacksmith shop is identified on this map as well as on various Civil War-era maps; on an 1863 map a warehouse is shown next to the North River Canal (constructed along the Maury River in the 1850s); and in general the area appears as a concentration of houses as early as the 1860s, suggesting Mechanicsville existed by the time of the Civil War. Perhaps the community coalesced in conjunction with the Amole shop, Edmondson's cement mill (which employed about twenty hands in 1838), and/or other industrial enterprises in the 1830s. Mechanicsville still appears on USGS maps.⁶

The wheat fan business appears to have been Henry Amole's principal source of livelihood during his young adult years. He married Sarah (Sallie) Holmes (ca. 1806-1883) in 1824 and in 1835 he purchased from Robert and Jennetta Alexander slightly over sixty-three acres adjoining his father Jacob and brother Joseph's lands. The year 1835 also saw the establishment of a log chapel known as Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church on a site adjacent to Amole's property. The 1850 census paints a picture of Henry Amole as a relatively prosperous middle-aged farmer. The census valued his by then 260-acre farm at \$7,350 and noted the standard assortment of livestock and the harvesting of sizable crops of wheat (200 bushels), corn (300 bushels), and oats (700 bushels). Amole owned two teenaged male slaves that year. (His brother Joseph owned seven slaves in 1850 and his father had owned ten slaves at his death in 1845.)⁷

The Rockbridge County land books indicate the construction of Amole's house, which he named Chapel Hill after nearby Wesley Chapel. The value of improvements on Amole's sixty-three-acre parcel increased from zero in 1841 to \$1,000 in 1842 with the marginal notation "\$1000 added for buildings." It seems likely the bricks for the house were fired on the property, for in 1872-1873 when the original log building of Wesley Chapel was replaced by the present brick one, its bricks were made in "Henry Amole's brick-yard, just in the rear of the church." According to the 1850 census, Henry and Sarah shared their household with a daughter, Sarah (Sallie) Virginia Amole (b. ca. 1835); a son, James Porter Amole (b. ca. 1837); a second son, Thomas Franklin (Frank) Amole (b. 1844); and a relative, Rosana Holmes (b. ca. 1825). In total the Amoles had seven children. Frank Amole is known to have been born in the present house. Both Frank and James Amole fought for the Confederacy during the Civil War, James enlisting in 1861 and Frank the following year. The brothers served with the Liberty Hall Volunteers, Company I, Fourth Virginia Infantry. James was wounded at Chancellorsville and was later captured at Spotsylvania whereupon he was incarcerated in Union prison camps at Point Lookout, Maryland, and Elmira, New York, through the duration of the war. Frank too was wounded, at Gettysburg and Monocacy, and captured. He was incarcerated at Camp Hamilton, Fortress Monroe, Virginia.⁸

In his will Henry Amole bequeathed third interests in his real estate to his sons James Porter Amole and Thomas Franklin Amole and his daughter Sallie Virginia Johnston, requiring each to provide their mother a "comfortable support during her natural life." Sarah Amole presumably lived at Chapel Hill after Henry's death in 1875 and until her own death in 1883 (the house is labeled Amole on an 1883 map). Sallie Virginia had married James T. Johnston, and according to Poppy Hall, who researched Chapel Hill for the American Architecture class at Washington and Lee University, the Johnstons lived in the house with Henry and Sarah Amole. There are indications James Johnston had problems with debt and that his relationship with Sallie was strained. For example, in 1880, according to the census of that year, Sallie was listed as married but also as the head of her household in the Buffalo Creek area of the county (where Chapel Hill was located), suggesting she lived apart from her husband. Living with her was her son Harrie Johnston (b. 1868), who in 1892 sold Chapel Hill to John D. Crist.⁹

J. D. Crist, a livestock farmer and land speculator, sold 242 acres including the Chapel Hill house to William “Willie” Brooke Rees in 1898. Rees (1867-1948) married Minnie Irene Webb (1868-1946) in 1901. According to an account of the wedding in the *Richmond Dispatch* discovered by Hall, it was stated the couple would “reside near Buffalo Creek, on the large farm recently purchased there by the bridegroom.” Period tax records indicate various improvements to the property, one of which may record the construction of the rear wing. In 1911 the value of buildings increased by \$200 and in 1921 the value increased an additional \$300. Rees family photographs from the early twentieth century document the house and farm. A 1906 photograph of the farm from the base of the hill to the east shows the house much as it appears today, with the exception of the present front porch. To the north of the house stood the outbuilding that survives today only as the chimney. The photo shows it to have been a gabled one-story building with white-painted wood siding. The two fireplaces of its chimney suggests it was a detached kitchen. Next to it, or perhaps attached to it on the east end, was another but smaller white-painted building. Behind the house and just off the north side of the present rear wing stood a gabled building that from its darker appearance may have been brick. The form and placement of this building suggests it was the smoke house. Off the south side of the house stood a well house with a front gable overhang supported on posts. A wood-sided gabled building—probably the stables and/or carriage house—stood further south. Beside it stood a small shed-roofed structure that was likely the privy. At the left edge of the photo is a bank barn with a shed-roofed straw shed on the south downslope side. Another, close-up view of the barn shows it to have had weatherboard siding, a wood-shingled gable roof, louvered rectangular vents, and one or more six-over-six windows. Large vertical-board doors on tracks slid open to create an entryway that spanned roughly half the upslope elevation. This building, which was of mortise-and-tenon timber frame construction, survived in ruinous condition for many years but collapsed during a snow and wind storm in March 1993.¹⁰

After the childless William Rees’s death in 1948, Chapel Hill and 204.89 acres passed to his nephew, Glasgow Rees. After Glasgow’s death in 1956 the property passed to his wife, Ruth Rees, and their daughter Patricia. For most of the late twentieth century and the early years of the twenty-first the house was used as a rental property. In 2009 Patricia, who married Jesse Smith, gave the house and 58.01 acres to her daughter Lorna Smith, who plans to rehabilitate Chapel Hill as a rental property.¹¹

Architectural Discussion

Chapel Hill is at once like and unlike typical Federal-style houses of western Virginia. It is conventional in its two-story one-room-deep form, side-gable roof, brick construction, end chimneys, symmetrical façade, and center-passage plan, all standard for the homes of prosperous Rockbridge County farmers of the antebellum period. The handsome molded brick cornices belong to a Valley of Virginia tradition documented by architectural historian Pam Simpson. Simpson notes the temporal concentration of the cornices during the period from the mid-1810s to 1840 (construction of Chapel Hill would have been in progress in 1841, possibly earlier). She also suggests, at least for early examples in Rockbridge County, an association with the construction firm of Samuel Darst and John Jordan, although she adds that it is very likely other builders executed molded brick cornices as well.¹²

It is on the interior that Chapel Hill departs from the norm, especially in the design of its transitional Federal-Greek Revival mantels. The parlor mantel is conventional in overall composition—specifically the tripartite division of the frieze; the circular and elliptical shapes and radial sunburst design of the frieze paterae; the cyma reversa profile of the console brackets at the ends of the frieze; and the paired colonnette pilasters—but the expression of these standard forms and motifs is idiosyncratic. The paterae, for example, are formed from lathe-turned elements, the shorter ones pear-shaped and the longer ones something like bowling pins, arranged like petals around a center boss. This is basically similar to academic sunburst paterae but the petalled effect makes a modern observer think of 1960s pop art flower designs. Perhaps the flower appearance was intentional, akin

to German fraktur or other folk art traditions. The console brackets are grossly overscaled, and their size and the heavy reeded corrugation of their curved surfaces give the appearance of roll-top desk covers. The Tuscan column-like colonnettes are less unusual, although their form is vernacular.

Perhaps the most likely explanation for the unusual characteristics of the parlor mantel is that they are the result of a vernacular interpretation of standard transitional Federal-Greek Revival mantels and other architectural details with which the craftsman was familiar. Idiosyncratic interpretations are not unknown in the region—for example, the extraordinary Federal mantel in the John Seawright House in Augusta County. A nearby house associated with the Amole family has Federal-style mantels that share features with the Chapel Hill parlor mantel such as elliptical sunburst paterae and pilaster colonnettes, although the treatment of the details is dissimilar. Other Federal-style houses in the county may just as easily have provided models. Harder to explain as an example of architectural emulation are the parlor mantel's incongruous console brackets, but it is conceivable these were inspired by a source other than mantel design, such as similar brackets in Greek Revival entry surrounds, or they may reflect the cyma motif that occurs in the house's cornice and stair designs.¹³

In addition to the emulative explanation for the parlor mantel design there may be a technomorphic explanation (meaning architectural form that results from a building or materials-working technology). Henry Amole was presumably an accomplished mechanic; in his younger landless days he and his brother Joseph would likely have been the principal craftsmen involved in building the wheat fans they sold. The Amoles and others in their wood- and ironworking shop, which was a fairly large and well-equipped concern by the mid-1830s, would have been skilled in the use of a range of machinery, presumably including lathes. The use of a lathe to produce the paterae elements rather than the more conventional technique of carving by hand suggests they were made by someone outside the house finishing trades—someone like Henry Amole or a mechanic in his employ. The other feature of the house that relies heavily on lathing is the stair and its turned newels and balusters. The newels and especially the balusters are unusual in design and, like the mantel paterae, suggest a craftsman familiar with the use of a lathe to produce decorative woodwork but less versed in finish carpentry. In the case of the stair, however, it has been remarked that it appears later than the early 1840s, and there is evidence such as various rectangular patches in the floorboards near the present upstairs newels that may point to a postbellum reworking.

Chapel Hill's other three mantels have design features that warrant analysis. The second-floor north mantel is in some respects more unusual than the parlor mantel. The louvered or corrugated appearance created by the multiple molding strips in the panels may have been meant to evoke fluting. Architect Asher Benjamin featured several fluted "chimney-piece" designs in his popular patternbook *The Practice of Architecture*, which went through seven printings from 1833 to 1851. Some of the Benjamin mantel designs had fluting in the frieze in addition to the pilasters. Benjamin's patternbooks were used in Rockbridge County during the antebellum period. *The Practice of Architecture* and an earlier Benjamin patternbook, *The Practical House Carpenter* (1830 edition), were used for the design of mantels in the ca. 1847 Margaret E. Poague House, located in the Fancy Hill area. *The Practical House Carpenter* was also used as a source for mantels in the 1845 Norgrove Building in Lexington and one of Benjamin's books may have been the source for mantels added in an 1850s remodeling of the 1826 house Locust Hill, located near Buena Vista. If examples of fluting in Benjamin's patternbooks were the source of the unusual corrugated patterns in Chapel Hill's upstairs mantel, then as with the parlor mantel the craftsman rendered the effect in technomorphic fashion using materials and techniques at hand (molding strips) rather than hand-cutting the flutes for a more accurate scalloped surface. Another aspect of the mantel, the pattern formed by its five panels, at first seems unusual or unprecedented in mantel design of the period, but in fact it closely matches a standard five-part composition of transitional Federal-Greek Revival mantels: pilasters with tall cap blocks that flank a central frieze panel.¹⁴

Chapel Hill's carpenter used a very similar five-part composition for the dining room mantel but left the panels blank. This was presumably done to visually relate the mantel to the blank panels of the adjacent wainscot and press. The fourth and last mantel, located in the second-floor south room, is the simplest and most economically constructed. Features such as the narrow frieze panel, stacked bed molding, and molded pilaster edges relate it to antebellum mantel design, but the attenuated triangular forms of the pilasters, which taper almost to a point where they rest on the top of the baseboard, give the mantel an almost futuristic appearance (the fins of 1950s automobiles come to mind). It is unclear what if any prototype or concept the craftsman was working from, although the design has something of the character of unadorned cabinetry work, which might relate it to the cases the Amole firm constructed for its wheat fans or other items.

An intriguing possibility for the unusual design of the parlor mantel is that it represents or alludes to items manufactured by Amole. Wheat fans were Amole's best known product; his shop also apparently made wagons and the presence of a tilt hammer indicates the capability to manufacture a range of iron goods and components. The paterae and cyma reversa brackets of the parlor mantel may have analogies to antebellum wheat fan design. The paterae resemble the vanes of an old-fashioned table fan and the bracket profile is similar to the curved end common in nineteenth-century wheat fan cases. However, standard wheat fan fans were constructed on the principal of paddle wheels and did not have a pinwheel form, so unless the Amole design was radically different, specific allusion to wheat fans seems unlikely. (In an attempt to determine the construction of Amole's wheat fans, local records were searched and notices were placed in the *Lexington News-Gazette* in hopes of finding surviving models, but without results.)¹⁵

A more promising analogy would be to gearing in general. The circular paterae resemble small gears with rounded teeth. Henry Amole emphasized his "Cast Iron Cog Wheels" in his 1826 wheat fan advertisement. He was evidently proud of that design feature of his wheat fans and apparently considered it a selling point. Perhaps paterae in the form of cog wheels was a tongue-in-cheek tribute, either Amole poking fun at himself or a private joke between himself and his craftsman. Extending this gearing analogy, the outward-facing rounded corrugations of the brackets look something like the ribbed appearance of a cage gear or lantern pinion, a standard component of traditional mill machinery. Although evidence has not come to light to suggest Amole manufactured mill components, there would have been a large local market for such and he was equipped and staffed to supply it.

Visual punning may have some merit as an explanation for the parlor mantel, but standard architectural emulation and technomorphism are sufficient to explain most if not all elements of this mantel and others in the house. If technomorphism is at work, then the parlor mantel may be an interesting case study in the cross-pollination of industry and architecture in antebellum Rockbridge County. It may also represent, along with other woodwork at Chapel Hill, the last vestige of the output of the Amole workshop.

Endnotes

1. Rockbridge County Deed Book D, p. 73; Hall, "Chapel Hill House;" "Winnowing;" Stephens and Norton, *Farmer's Guide*, 409-414; *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 411. A number of individuals and organizations assisted the work, foremost among them the owner of the property and sponsor of the nomination, Lorna A. Smith, who also contributed historical research to the project. Others who provided assistance included Henry Amole descendent Kim Amole; historians Poppy Hall, Bill Trout, and Charles Bodie; librarians Lisa McCown and Vaughan Stanley; Chapel Hill neighbor and proofreader Jean Eisenhauer; and architectural historian Calder Loth for the concept of architectural technomorphism. Assistance was also provided by Virginia Department of Historic Resources staff members Michael Pulice and Kelly Spradley-Kurowski.

2. Crawford and Lyle, *Rockbridge County Artists & Artisans*, 216; Dew, *Bond of Iron*, 64-65; Weaver-Brady Papers; *Weaver vs. Jordan, Davis & Co.*
3. *American Farmer*, November 29, 1822; *New England Farmer, and Gardener's Journal*, March 25, 1836; Hutchinson, *Cyrus Hall McCormick*, 87, 91.
4. *Union*, June 19, 1835; Dunaway, *History of the James River and Kanawha Company*, 90; *American Railroad Journal*, May 21, 1836; *Lexington Gazette*, February 9, 1838.
5. *Union*, July 10, 1835.
6. Carmichael map; Gilmer map; *Lexington Gazette*, February 9, 1838.
7. Rockbridge County Deed Book S, p. 469; Rockbridge County Will Book 9, p. 421; Hall, "Chapel Hill House."
8. McDowell, William George, Papers.
9. Rockbridge County Deed Book 77, p.391; Rockbridge County Will Book 21, p. 454; Hall, "Chapel Hill House;" *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 411; McCorkle, "Wesley Chapel;" Carmichael, "County of Rockbridge."
10. Lorna Smith and Jean Eisenhauer personal communication; Hall, "Chapel Hill House;" *Richmond Dispatch*, February 22, 1901; *Rockbridge County, Virginia, Heritage Book*, 327.
11. Lorna Smith personal communication; Hall, "Chapel Hill House."
12. Simpson, "Molded Brick Cornice in the Valley of Virginia," 29-33.
13. McCleary, "John Seawright House," 26.
14. Reiff, *Houses from books*, 46; Pezzoni, "Margaret E. Poague House," 7.3; Pezzoni, "Norgrove Building;" Simpson, "Locust Hill," 7.1.
15. *Lexington News-Gazette*, November 24 and December 1, 2010.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

N/A

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)

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency

Chapel Hill
Name of Property

Rockbridge Co., Virginia
County and State

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 # _____

Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: Rockbridge Co. Courthouse, Lexington, Va.

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DHR ID # 081-0521

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Weaver-Brady Papers. Special Collections, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

"Winnowing." Article online at www.wikipedia.com

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approx. 2.3 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References

Chapel Hill
Name of Property

Rockbridge Co., Virginia
County and State

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>17</u> Zone	<u>639860</u> Easting	<u>4175760</u> Northing	3	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing
2	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing	4	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The boundaries of the nominated area are shown on the 1:200-scale map that accompanies the nomination.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

Problems with Rockbridge County's tax parcel maps made use of property lines infeasible for the boundaries of the nominated area. Therefore, a rectangular area of approximately 2.3 acres has been defined to encompass the Chapel Hill house, chimney of former outbuilding, and barn ruins. All of this land was historically associated with the property.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title J. Daniel Pezzoni (with input from Lorna A. Smith)
organization Landmark Preservation Associates date January 7, 2011
street & number 6 Houston St. telephone (540) 464-5315
city or town Lexington state VA zip code 24450
e-mail dan_pezzoni@rockbridge.net

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Photographs:

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

Name of Property: Chapel Hill
City or Vicinity: Lexington vic.
County: Rockbridge State: VA
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni
Date Photographed: February 2010

Description of Photograph(s) and number: East (front) and north elevations. View southwest. Photo 1 of 6.

Name of Property: Chapel Hill
City or Vicinity: Lexington vic.
County: Rockbridge State: VA
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni
Date Photographed: September 2009

Description of Photograph(s) and number: North and west elevations. Looking southeast. Photo 2 of 6.

Name of Property: Chapel Hill
City or Vicinity: Lexington vic.
County: Rockbridge State: VA
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni
Date Photographed: February 2010

Description of Photograph(s) and number: West and south elevations. View looking northeast. Photo 3 of 6.

Name of Property: Chapel Hill
City or Vicinity: Lexington vic.
County: Rockbridge State: VA
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni
Date Photographed: September 2009

Description of Photograph(s) and number: First-floor south room mantel and wainscot. Photo 4 of 6.

Name of Property: Chapel Hill
City or Vicinity: Lexington vic.
County: Rockbridge State: VA
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni
Date Photographed: September 2009

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Second-floor north room mantel and press. Photo 5 of 6.

Name of Property: Chapel Hill
City or Vicinity: Lexington vic.
County: Rockbridge State: VA
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni
Date Photographed: February 2010

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Chimney of former building. View looking northwest. Photo 6 of 6.

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.460 et seq.).

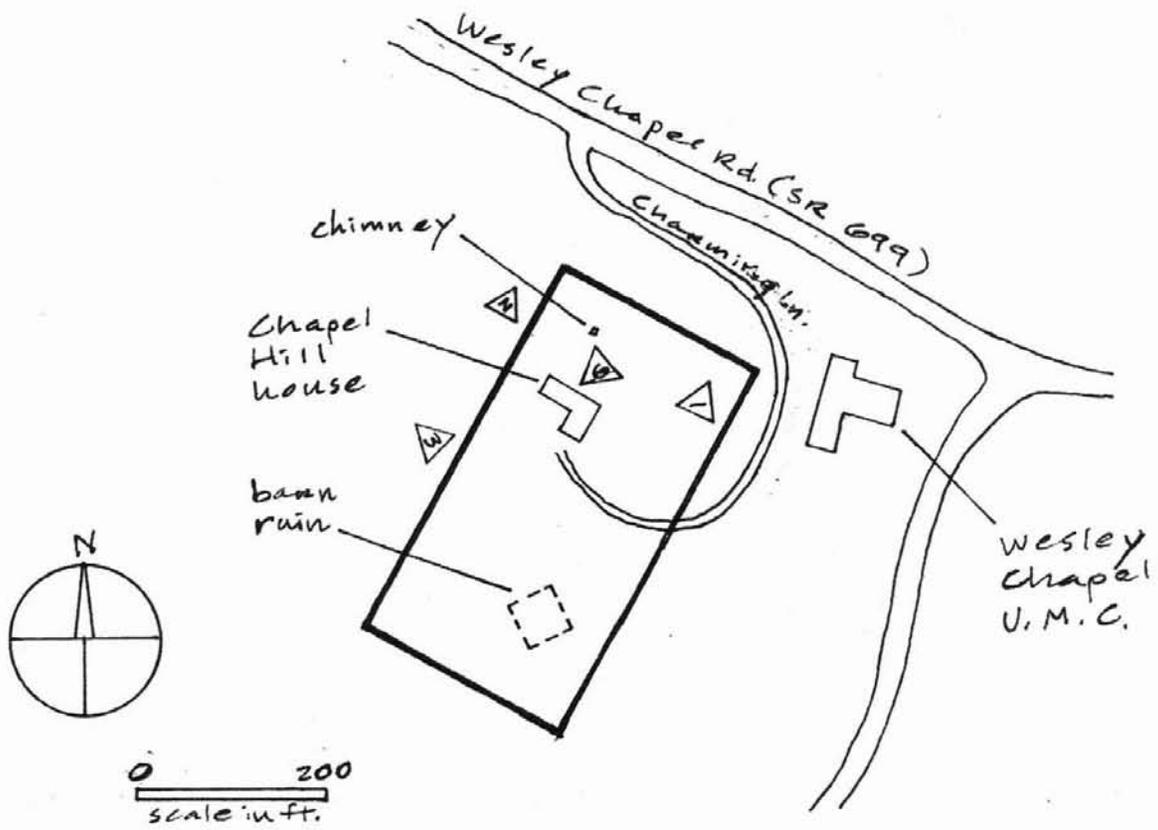
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Chapel Hill

DHR ID# 081-0521

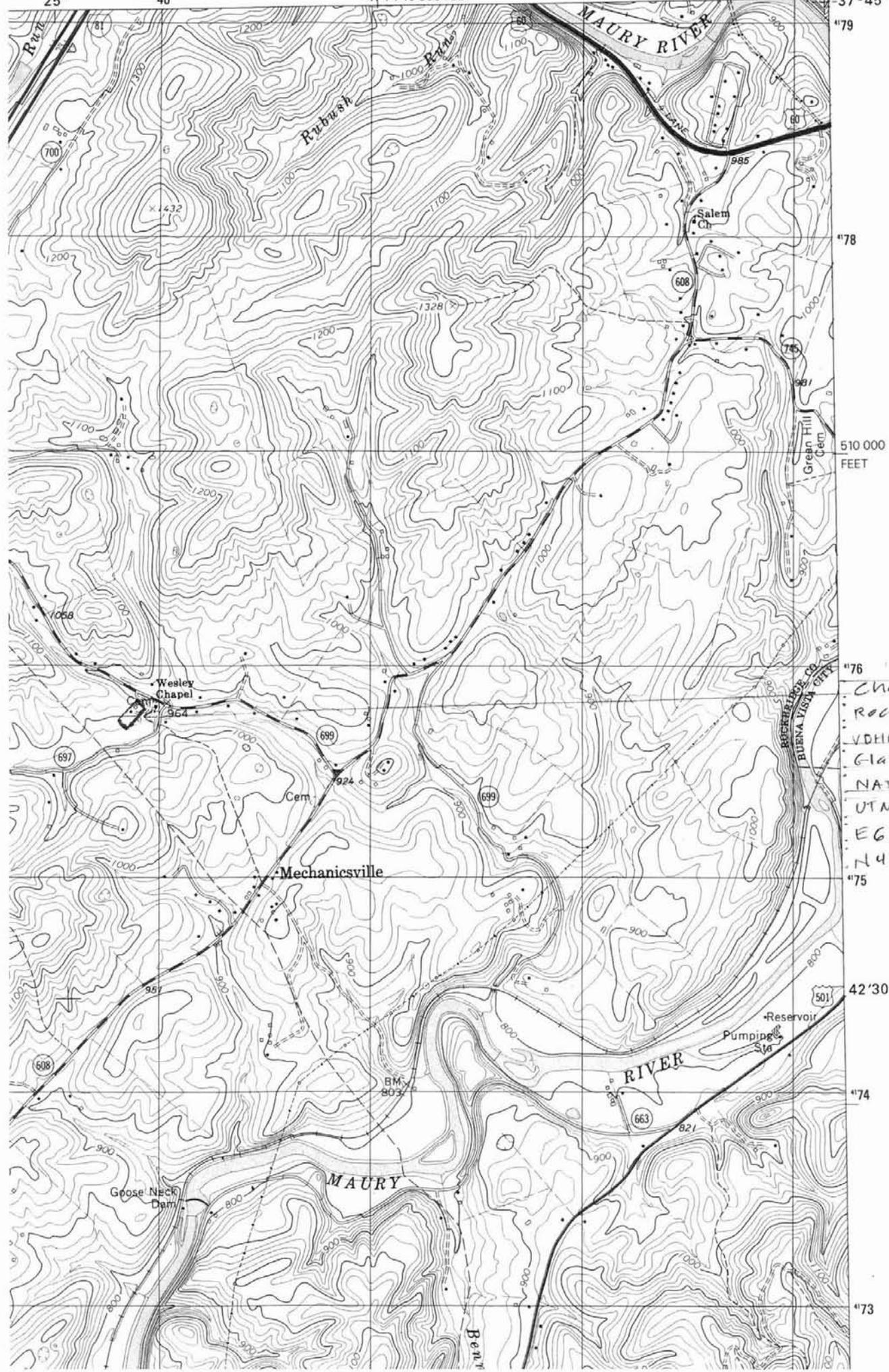
Rockbridge County, Virginia

Rectangle indicates nominated area. Number and direction of view of exterior nomination photographs indicated by triangular markers. Size and placement of resources approximate.



7.5-MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

25' 40' 41 1 740 000 FEET 42' 79°22'30" 37°45'



510 000 FEET

"76
 Chapel Hill
 Rockbridge Co, Va.
 VDHIR ID# 081-0521
 Glasgow, VA quad
 NAD 83
 UTM reference (zone 17),
 EG39860
 N4175760
 "75

42'30"

"74

"73