

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

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

1. NAME

COMMON:
Porto Bello

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
N bank of Queens Creek on Camp Peary Military Reservation

CITY OR TOWN:
First District
Williamsburg vicinity (Congressman Thomas N. Downing)

STATE: Virginia CODE: 51 COUNTY: York CODE: 100

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) vacant	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	_____	_____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY Col. James Dunn, Commander

OWNER'S NAME:
Department of Defense

STREET AND NUMBER:
Armed Forces Experimental Training Activity

CITY OR TOWN:
Camp Peary, Williamsburg

STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

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

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Yorktown

STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1972 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:
Room 1116 Ninth Street State Office Building

CITY OR TOWN:
Richmond

STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Virginia

COUNTY: York

ENTRY NUMBER: _____

DATE: _____

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The small brick house at Porto Bello stands on a wooded hill on the north side of Queens Creek, about half-way between the creek's confluence with the York River and Capitol Landing, one of the docking areas that served Williamsburg in the eighteenth century.

Desandrouin's 1782 map of the Williamsburg area shows five buildings at Porto Bello plantation. These might be interpreted as Lord Dunmore's residence, a kitchen, and three small outbuildings--one to the north and two across a small creek to the west. Dunmore himself described the plantation as a more elaborate complex in his (perhaps inflated) request for compensation from the British government after the Revolution. He valued the buildings at \$600 for "Two Dwelling Houses at Porto Bello with Kitchens and Offices," and \$200 for "Buildings at Porto Bello newly erected, a Large barn, Cow Houses, Stables, Fatning House, Work Shops etc." The dwelling house is not noted as "newly erected," and so could have been standing before the property was purchased by Dunmore.

The rather extensive outbuilding complex notwithstanding, Porto Bello served not as the governor's principal residence, but rather his country retreat and hunting lodge. Dunmore indicated its simple nature by setting the worth of its furniture at \$80, as compared to \$3,200 for the Governor's Palace at Williamsburg.

Although local tradition labels the present house as that occupied by Dunmore, the structure exhibits some features more typical of the post-Revolutionary War period, and it perhaps dates from about 1800. A shallow depression just north of the structure may be the site of Dunmore's earlier house, a possibility that might be borne out by archaeological examination. The earlier house may have served as a source of brick reused in the later building, with the old cellar being filled in the fourth quarter of the eighteenth century. Only the walls of the present house survived a fire in 1915. The interior and exterior trim is modern and the plan is altered. The Flemish bond brick walls had supported a clipped gambrel roof, but the upper end walls were taken down and a mansard roof was placed on the remaining masonry.

The original plan, as remembered by a former occupant, was unusual for Virginia and more typical of New England houses. It consisted of two rooms on each floor, all heated by a single center chimney. Between this chimney and the front wall was a small entrance hall, and behind it was a stair to the second floor.

The jack arches have been replaced, and some alterations in window and door openings have taken place. All other brick work is in original condition. The building is unoccupied, but it remains in a fairly stable state and is receiving minimum maintenance from the United States military.

E.A.C.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

During his short term as royal governor of Virginia, Lord Dunmore acquired some extensive tracts of land in the western part of the state, and a country plantation on the York River called Porto Bello. "His Lordships country House at Porto Bello" was a convenient six miles from Williamsburg, and although its ownership by the governor was short lived, it figured in the dramatic final stages of Virginia's colonial period.

The earliest known owner of Porto Bello was John James Hullette, a colonial of dubious character. He was ordered by the York County Court in 1755 to repay £28, 16 shillings that he had won from Alexander Finnie of Williamsburg by gambling with loaded dice. As Hullette was unable to raise sufficient money to comply with the court order, the ownership of Porto Bello was transferred to Finnie by the General Court in 1758. Finnie had similarly bad luck, being forced by his creditors to offer the land and houses then existing for sale in March, 1769. Finnie died at Porto Bello later in the year, and the plantation was purchased at auction by John Prentis and Company in December. In November, 1770, it was conveyed to William and Rachel Drummond.

Drummond died in 1773, and in the autumn Porto Bello was offered for sale prior to public auction in November. There soon arose a controversy, and Rind's Virginia Gazette of November 4 carried a notice in which Mrs. Drummond accused an unnamed "third person" of interfering with the sale of her property. Porto Bello was bought by Lord Dunmore later in the year, and it has been conjectured that he was the "third person."

Dunmore retained ownership of the property until patriot hostility forced him from the colony on the eve of the Revolution. The house seems to have not been used by the governor as a true country house, and it was probably utilized mainly as a hunting lodge and place of refuge from political haggling. In June of 1775 Dunmore determined that conditions in Williamsburg were too dangerous for him and his family to remain, and so he took refuge on the British flagship Fowley on the York River. The Virginia Gazette (Purdie) of July 14 reported that after the Palace had been broken into several times "all his Lordship's domesticks have now left the palace, and are gone, bag and baggage, to his farm at Porto Bello" On July 7 Dunmore left the Fowley and with Captain Montague took a barge from Yorktown

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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STATE Virginia	
COUNTY York	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

significance -2-

to Porto Bello. The gentlemen had dinner there, but they found it necessary to beat a hasty retreat when an armed contingent of patriots from Williamsburg was seen approaching. Dunmore wrote that "We had just time to get into our boat and to escape." Two carpenters brought to cut a mast for one of the ships were left behind and captured by the Virginians.

The Virginia authorities seized Porto Bello along with Dunmore's personal possessions at the Palace, sold the possessions at public auction, and rented the plantation to Dr. James Carter. In November, 1779, the estate was sold by James Shields, escheator of York County, to Francis Bright. The Bright family retained ownership for half a century, and probably built the present brick house. Samuel Francis Bright was born in 1803 and in 1827 he married Susan Hannah. Three years later she died and was buried at Porto Bello, her grave being marked by a fine Greek Revival table tomb. Bright married again in 1834, this time to Elianna Maria Jerdone Southall. This union was also shortlived, for Elianna died in 1839 and was buried at Porto Bello.

The property passed to various owners later in the nineteenth century, and was owned by the Mahone family when the present structure was gutted by fire in 1915. The house was rebuilt within the old walls, and at the beginning of World War II the property was sold by the Mahones to the federal government and became part of Camp Peary, Navy Seabee base.

The site remains in a largely undisturbed state, and archaeological excavation might establish whether the present building is Dunmore's or whether the depression to the north is the Revolutionary period house.

The site of Porto Bello is an important landmark of Virginia in her role in the colony's move to independence. From here the state's last royal governor fled open patriot hostility, forced back to the safety of his shipboard headquarters. The revolutionary character of the colony had changed from defiance to militance, and the first armed clash between Virginia and British forces at the Battle of Great Bridge was five months away.

E.A.C.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Campbell, Helen J., "Porto Bello," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, vol. LXIX, no. 4 (1961), pp. 466-468.
 Noel Hume, Ivor, 1775 Another Part of the Field, New York, 1956.
Virginia Gazette (Purdie & Dixon).
Virginia Gazette (Rind), Nov. 4, 1773.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			C R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	37° 18' 08"	76° 38' 50"		0		
NE	37° 18' 08"	76° 38' 36"				
SE	37° 17' 58"	76° 38' 36"				
SW	37° 17' 58"	76° 38' 50"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 15 acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

November 1972

STREET AND NUMBER:

Room 1116 Ninth Street State Office Building

CITY OR TOWN:

Richmond

STATE

Virginia

CODE

51

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

National State Local

Name

J.R. Fishburne, Director
Virginia Historic

Title

Landmarks Commission

Date

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

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date

ATTEST:

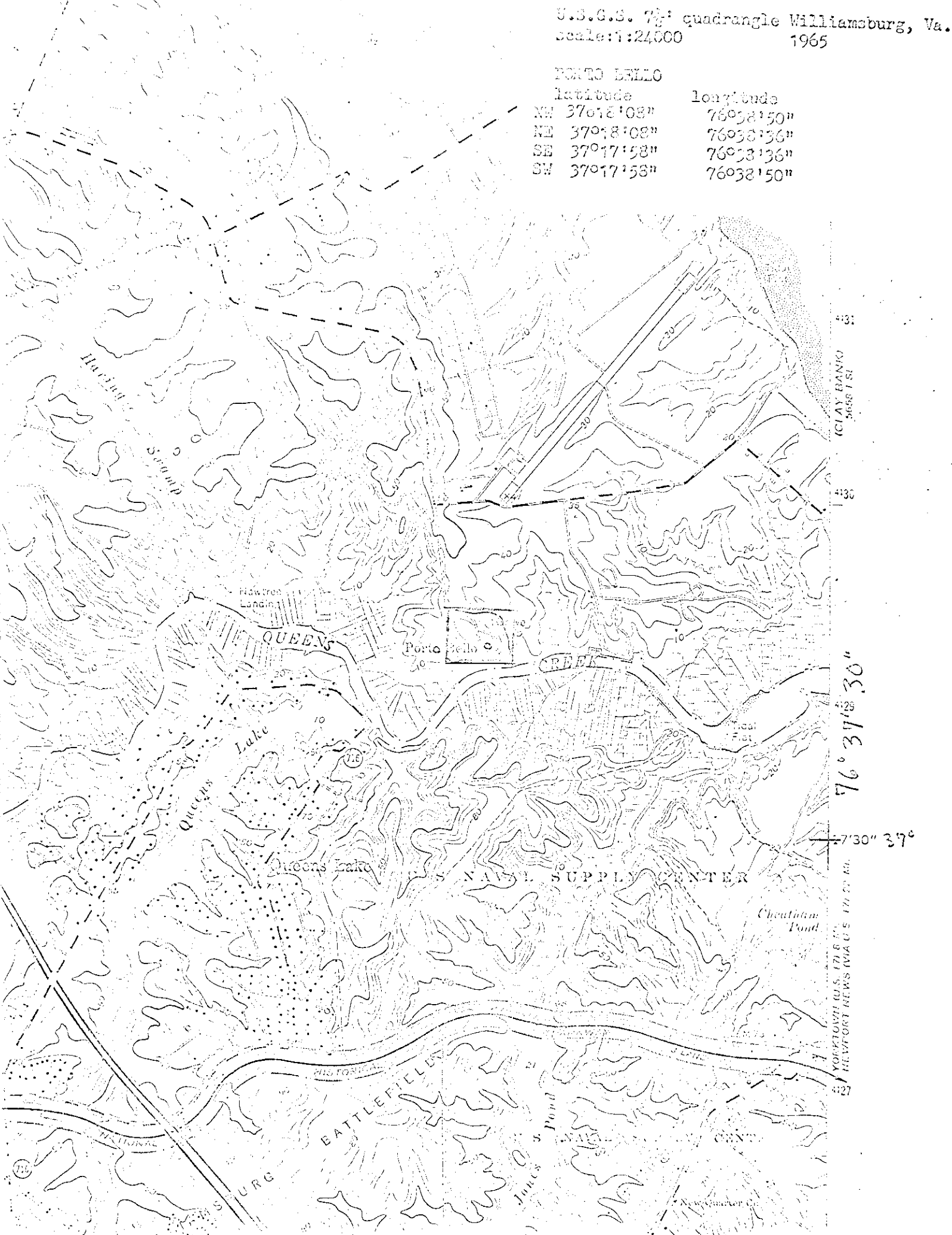
Keeper of The National Register

Date

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

PONTO BELLO

	latitude	longitude
NW	37°18'08"	76°38'50"
NE	37°18'08"	76°38'36"
SE	37°17'58"	76°38'36"
SW	37°17'58"	76°38'50"



43;
 (CLAY BANK)
 5658 1 ST
 430

76° 37' 30"

7'30" 37°

YORKTOWN (U.S. 17) S.E.
 NEWFORT NEWS (VIA U.S. 17) S.W.

527