

VLR 3/17/4  
NRHP 5/19/4

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 Dr. Virgil Cox House VDHR#113-5034

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 406 West Stuart Drive not for publication N/A

city or town Galax vicinity N/A

state Virginia code VA county Grayson code 640 zip code 24333

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 nationally \_\_\_\_\_ statewide \_\_\_\_\_ X locally (\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments)

[Signature] 3/30/04  
Signature of certifying official Date  
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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 Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**United States Department of the Interior  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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 Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this property is: Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

\_\_\_\_\_ 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): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**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	
2	0	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
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

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling  
HEALTH CARE: medical office

DOMESTIC: Bed & Breakfast Inn

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick  
walls WOOD: German siding  
roof Asbestos Shingles  
other Wood

**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.

**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 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Health Care \_\_\_\_\_

Architecture \_\_\_\_\_

Politics / Government \_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

c. 1913 - 1954 and 1936 - 1954 \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1936 \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Dr. Virgil J. Cox \_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

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.

\_\_\_ 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Location of Additional Data**

State Historic Preservation Office

\_\_\_ Other State agency

\_\_\_ Federal agency

\_\_\_ Local government

\_\_\_ University

\_\_\_ Other

Name of repository:

Virginia Dept. Historic Resources \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreage of Property** approx. .9 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>17</u>	<u>506227</u>	<u>4057172</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
3	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
<u>    </u>	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.)

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title Sherry Joines Wyatt

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date October 20, 2003

street & number 102 Junkin Street telephone (540) 381-8268

city or town Christiansburg state VA zip code 24073

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**Additional Documentation**

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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)

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**Property Owner**

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

name Sarah Price

street & number 406 West Stuart Drive telephone (276)238-9998

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**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.

## 7. Description

### Summary Description

The Dr. Virgil Cox House is an extremely well-preserved example of early Colonial Revival architecture. Built about 1913 in Galax, Grayson County, Virginia, the frame house features a complex form with gabled and polygonal projections and a complex hip roof that are associated with the earlier Queen Anne style. Architectural details, however, such as the Tuscan columns on the wrap-around porch are Colonial Revival. The interior trim, which is primarily varnished oak, is simple with Colonial Revival as well as Craftsman stylistic influences, such as the staircase's rectilinear design. Historic wallpaper exists in the entry hall and dining room. The entry hall is grand and is flanked by a small and a large parlor. A similar hall on the second floor gives access to the several bedrooms and an ancillary hall serves the maid's room, which is also accessible from a kitchen stair. Located at 406 West Stuart Drive, the house is one of a handful of large houses built overlooking downtown Galax during the first dozen years of the town's history. The lot, which is nearly an acre, is terraced and features an original garage as well as a boxwood garden and other historic plantings. The boxwood garden is of particular importance and maintains its c.1920 sundial and c.1940 brick wall. The contributing resources of the property are the main house, the garage, and the walled boxwood garden. There are no non-contributing resources.

### Detailed Description

An excellent example of the early Colonial Revival style, the Cox House is a very large dwelling with a complex exterior presentation, complex roof plan, and an equally complex floor plan. The house was built around 1913 and is situated on a hill above West Stuart Drive. The building faces east, overlooking downtown Galax. To the north of the house is the Knight's Inn (former Rose Motel), a one-story motor-court building that is situated further up the hill and near U.S. 58. Only one end of the motel is visible from the Cox House lawn. To the south of the Cox House is the Captain J. B. Waugh house, a large, brick Colonial Revival house built around the same time as the Cox House and with similar stylistic details. Immediately east of the house is a residential neighborhood that dates from the 1910s through the 1950s; it separates the house from the downtown commercial district.

The exterior of the Cox House, which is sheathed in German siding, is in the Queen Anne form with irregular, front-gable projections on the facade and north side; a projection with a polygonal bay on the southwest corner, a gable-roof dormer on the facade; and a small, upper balcony on the facade with attenuated Tuscan columns and pilasters. The balcony also features the original door with a beveled, single light and sidelights that match the first floor entry underneath. While the house's complexity is representative of the Queen Anne style, the exterior details, such as the Tuscan porch columns and the sidelights, are more Colonial Revival in character. The Cox House maintains its original one-over-one windows, which are typical of houses built during the 1910s.

Interestingly, the interior displays a few Craftsman influences such as the use of beveled glass doors with a Craftsman-style muntin pattern on the built-in cabinets that flank the brick fireplace in the north parlor, as well as the oak, batten-and-panel woodwork under the staircase and the simple, square balusters and newell post of the stair's railing. Floors throughout the lower level are oak, laid on the diagonal, while floors upstairs are oak, maple (probably a replacement), and tongue and groove pine. Oak is the principle wood used throughout the house in simple, Colonial

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Dr. Virgil Cox House

Galax, Grayson County, Virginia

~~Revival door surrounds as well as the baseboards and the two-panel doors. Very little of this wood work has ever been painted; painted trim is found only in some of the upstairs bedrooms.~~

The principle feature of the floor plan is the grand entry hall that is repeated on the second floor. From this hall radiate the primary rooms of the house. The walls of the hall are sheathed in historic, yellow wallpaper that mimics silk with a Colonial Revival-style brocade design. Immediately to the left (south) of the hall is the larger of the two parlors; from it two Craftsman-style French doors lead to the sun porch. To the right (north) of the entry hall, in a front projection, is a smaller parlor with fireplace and built-in bookcases. Centrally located, at the end of the wide hall, beyond the massive staircase, is the dining room. Polygonal in plan, this large room maintains its historic, silver-leaf wallpaper with Oriental motifs. The kitchen and former doctor's office lie in the northwest corner of the house while a polygonal-plan bedroom lies in the southwest corner.

The kitchen and doctor's office area have been recently altered with the demolition of the wall separating the two rooms (a half-wall remains) and the demolition of the windowed partition wall that separated the waiting area and office entry, now a eating nook and utility room, from Dr. Cox's exam room/office. Narrow shelves in the kitchen stairwell are reported to have served as the doctor's pharmacy. This steep, narrow stair rises from the kitchen and lands in a small bedroom in the northwest corner of the house most likely used as the maid's room. A second set of stairs rises from the maid's room to the attic.

From the main stairs in the entry, the second floor plan is reminiscent of that of the first floor with four bedrooms radiating off the hall. A small, narrow hall leads from the main hall to the northwest corner of the house, which contains the aforementioned maid's room, a former storage room (recently converted into a bathroom), and a c.1940 bathroom. The two bathrooms were probably a single bedroom until the 1930s when it was partitioned into bath and storage spaces.

Outside the house, the .9 acre lot is divided into several "terraces" with a walled boxwood garden that was installed by S. C. and Rita Cox on the north side of the house. The formally planned garden features an original sundial with a concrete base in its center. The low brick wall that surrounds the garden was installed by Dr. and Mrs. Cox. A tall hedge borders the western boundary of the garden and has an arch cut into it. By ascending a flight of stairs and passing through this arch one accessed a rose garden (now virtually lost) installed by Dr. and Mrs. Cox. Further up the hill, a long, flattened area visible on the upper section of the lawn once served as a putting green where Mrs. Cox practiced her golf game. A gable-roof garage constructed of rock-faced concrete block (altered with modern concrete block on its front) exists near the house. A storage area opens onto the upper section of the lawn from the upper level of the garage. A second concrete block outbuilding once sat to the north of this building, but has been removed.

Aside from the renovation of the kitchen/office, the addition of the bathroom in the former storage area, and the removal of a tiny bathroom in the equally tiny maid's room, the house is virtually untouched. Other alterations, such as the remodeling of bathrooms and the partial enclosure of the front porch to create the sun room, date primarily from the 1930s or 1940s during

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Dr. Virgil Cox House

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~~Dr. and Mrs. Cox's occupancy. The Cox House and its grounds maintain an excellent degree of integrity.~~

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Dr. Virgil Cox House

Galax, Grayson County, Virginia

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**Summary Paragraph**

The Dr. Virgil Cox House was built about 1913 by W. E. Cox and was owned from 1918 through 1936 by S. C. Cox, who served as secretary-treasurer of the Galax-based Mountain Loan Corporation. Built during the first dozen years of the town's existence, the house is an excellent example of the handful of large, architecturally ornate dwellings built by some of the town's entrepreneurial citizens along West Stuart Drive between about 1900 and 1915. Featured in the 1914 booklet, *Galax: Largest Ten-year Old Town in Virginia*, the house was included among a listing of some of the finest houses in Galax. The architecture of the dwelling features the complex form commonly associated with the Queen Anne style, but is rendered with clear Colonial Revival details that were fashionable among the upper-middle class during the 1910s. The extremely high level of integrity of the property, both on the exterior and interior as well as in the grounds, makes it eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C as a superb example of the early Colonial Revival style.

The house was purchased at auction in 1936 by Dr. Virgil J. Cox, after his uncle, S. C. Cox, became a financial victim of the Great Depression. From late 1936 until their respective deaths in 1991 and 1992, Dr. and Mrs. Virgil Cox lived in the house and from the 1950s through the 1980s, Dr. Cox had his medical office in a former apartment on the first floor of the house. The association of the house with Dr. Cox lends significance under Criterion B, since Dr. Cox was a person of considerable importance to the health care of Galax citizenry and to the political history of southwestern Virginia. Between 1962 and 1965, Dr. Cox served in the Virginia House of Delegates and was largely responsible for the legislation that created Grayson Highlands State Park. As a physician, Dr. Cox was often described as a "real country doctor" who treated his patients in an informal and congenial environment; keeping a home office and accepting barter goods long past the era when these practices were the norm. Yet, Dr. Cox provided modern health care and to better serve his patients, he established the Blue Ridge Hospital and Clinic, which treated emergencies, prolonged illnesses, and maternity cases, in 1952. This clinic was consolidated into the Twin County Community Hospital in 1974.

The period of significance for the Dr. Virgil Cox House begins in c. 1913 for Criterion C and in 1936 for Criterion B. The property lacks special significance after 1954 and the period of significance ends with the fifty-year cut-off for Criteria B and C.

**Historical Background**

The town of Galax was established in 1903 when a spur rail line was constructed from the textile village of Fries to Cliffview, north of present-day Galax. A group of local investors, organized by James Carico, formed a real estate company and purchased 375 acres on Chestnut Creek as a site for a new town. The group, which included Captain John Waugh and Thomas L.

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Dr. Virgil Cox House

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Felts, persuaded the Norfolk and Western Railroad to extend a line into the new town, which they called Bonaparte. The town's name was changed to Galax in 1904, reportedly because those decorative leaves made up the first express freight shipped on the new line.<sup>1</sup>

Galax was chartered in 1906. The town grew quickly and in this same year a high school was established. The *First Annual Catalogue of Galax High School* described its location as "a little country town at the terminus of the Norfolk and Western Railway. It is free from the temptations and evils characteristic of so many of our towns and cities. Our citizenship cannot be excelled anywhere . . ."<sup>2</sup>

By 1908, the population of Galax stood at 600 people, but growth came quickly as the timber and furniture industries accelerated. Early in the town's history, Captain Waugh and others invested in the Galax Furniture Company to utilize the area's rich timber resources. Galax also became a significant shipping point for cross ties, acid wood, and tan bark. By 1911, Galax was home to four lumber dealers and eight saw mills.<sup>3</sup>

The focus on wood products continued into the 1920s as furniture factories flourished in Galax. In 1919, Vaughan-Bassett Furniture factory was opened. This successful enterprise was followed by Vaughan Furniture in 1923 and Webb Furniture in 1924. These factories along with the earlier Galax Buggy Company and other businesses created a strong economic base that enabled Galax to be home to two banks, three drug stores, three hotels, two restaurants, and four physicians by 1917. The 1920 U.S. Census indicated that the population had more than doubled since 1908, and included 1,250 citizens.<sup>4</sup>

It was during the initial period of intense growth in Galax that the Cox House was constructed. The original investors in Galax placed town lots on sale beginning in December of 1903 and the office was closed around 1914 when the lot sales were complete. As indicated earlier, Captain J. B. Waugh was one of the original investors in the new town of Galax and the land upon which the Cox House is situated can be traced back to him. The *Grayson County Grantee Index* supports Waugh's role in the development of Galax and shows J. B. Waugh to have been a major land holder during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As part of his real estate transactions, Waugh sold 115 acres of land to T. F. Roberts in 1911. The 1904 plat of Galax indicates that Roberts was another large land owner; his home was located near where the Cox house now stands. Roberts subdivided the tract he purchased from Waugh and sold a .9 acre lot to W. E. Cox in 1913.<sup>5</sup>

The circa 1914 booklet, *Galax: Largest Ten Year Old Town in Virginia*, illustrates the Cox House and names W. E. Cox as the home's owner. The house at 406 West Stuart Drive was most likely built by W. E. Cox during 1913. The 1920 Census records William E. Cox, age forty-

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four, as living alone in Galax and it may have been that Cox's wife, Mittie, who is referenced in the property deed, was deceased by this time. Although, W. E. Cox does not appear in the 1910 Soundex, nor in the 1930 Soundex, oral tradition holds that W. E. Cox was the person known as Ed Cox. Family recollections indicate that Ed Cox was a man of many talents who worked as a carpenter and a garage owner. He also became a historian of Galax, preparing "Pioneers, Ghosts, Bonaparte, and Galax" for the 1956 Golden Anniversary program booklet.<sup>6</sup>

Whatever their personal history, W. E. and Mittie Cox only owned the property three and a half years. They conveyed the house and lot to D. A. and Minnie Robertson on June 17, 1916. Robertson, in turn, sold the property to S. C. and Rita Cox on October 25, 1918.<sup>7</sup>

Samuel Cleveland Cox (1882-1952), was the son of Samuel and Phoebe Cox, Jr. and could trace his family's establishment in Grayson County for several generations. S. C. Cox and Rita Elizabeth Wilkinson were married in 1918 and established themselves at 406 West Stuart Drive. A member of the Methodist church, S. C. Cox was also a Rotarian and a golfer. He served as postmaster for several years then helped to found the Mountain Loan Corporation. Cox is listed in the 1932 *Directory of Galax* as secretary-treasurer of Mountain Loan.<sup>8</sup>

Worth Cox, the only child of S.C. Cox, was born at 406 West Stuart Drive in 1920 and has clear memories of the property. The Cox family was one of the few in Galax to keep their own cow at this time. The cow lot and shed were located above the flower garden, which Mrs. Cox had installed with a sundial and lattice entries (removed and replaced with a brick wall by Dr. Virgil Cox). Additionally, the property had three outbuildings: a garage (extant), a coal and wood house (demolished), and a wash house (demolished). Both the coal house and wash house speak to the complex household operations as well as to the role of African Americans within the household since the Cox family employed both a cook and a yard man. Some of Worth Cox's clearest memories are of the huge quantities of coal required to heat the house each year, the difficulty of bringing it up the steep driveway with draft horses and a wagon, and the dirt created by its unloading into the basement. The scale of the residence and grounds was equaled by the scale of the lifestyle within. Rita Cox is remembered as a literary woman who loved to entertain and card parties were frequent pastimes.<sup>9</sup>

It appears that S.C. Cox's position at Mountain Loan Corporation made him highly susceptible to the onset of the Great Depression and in 1936 the family lost everything. The Deed of Trust, recorded on January 17, 1936, enumerates acreage in Peach Bottom and Buck Mountain, their Galax residence, as well as a rental house and other acreage in Carroll County. Their personal property, which was also liquidated, included two automobiles, stock in Galax Golf Course, fourteen cows, and much of their household furniture. These items were used to

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secure debts to family members, individuals, local businesses, and the Mountain Loan Corporation in excess of \$50,000. On November 28, 1936, the house at 406 West Stuart Drive was sold at auction to Dr. Virgil Jefferson Cox for the amount of \$8005.00. The S. C. Cox family moved to Roanoke, Virginia in 1937 where Cox had been awarded a position as Deputy U. S. Marshall; the Coxes remained there until S. C.'s death in 1952.<sup>10</sup>

**Dr. Virgil J. Cox: Medicine in Galax, 1936 - c.1985**

The nephew of S.C. Cox, Dr. Virgil Cox was the son of Jefferson Davis and Lucy Cox. He was born on November 5, 1904 and was raised on a farm in Grayson County. The youngest of seven children, Dr. Cox recalled in 1981, that his family's farm income was not sufficient to send him to Emory and Henry University, but he worked his way through school, beginning in 1925, by trimming hedges, waiting on tables, tutoring students, and assisting in the chemistry department. After his graduation in 1929, he taught at Baywood High School, earning \$115 a month, and worked as a salesman during the summer to afford to enter the Medical College of Virginia in 1930. He received his medical degree with honors in 1934 and completed his internship at Wilmington General Hospital. Dr. Cox then moved to Galax to open his practice in 1936. His first office was in a building that also housed a café.<sup>11</sup>

Dr. Cox and his wife Gladys Gay Guynn (1907-1992) were secretly married while he was finishing his education; Mrs. Cox was working as a schoolteacher. Once Dr. Cox's education was complete, the marriage was announced and the couple moved into an apartment in the house at 406 West Stuart Drive before purchasing that property in November of 1936.<sup>12</sup>

The need for additional physicians in Galax during the 1930s was clear. Based upon the strong industrial growth of the 1920s, the town's commercial district expanded significantly and contained a number of brick buildings including two hotels and a theater. The town grew to 2,544 citizens by 1930. The health care available in Galax in 1932, shortly before Dr. Cox's arrival, consisted of six physicians and three dentists. Two of these physicians practiced at Galax Hospital, which was located at 105 West Center Street in a building constructed around 1925. This thirty-bed hospital had been organized by Dr. J. K. Caldwell in 1925. Other early physicians in Galax included Doctors Bishop and Bolen.<sup>13</sup>

While Dr. Virgil Cox was one of several physicians practicing in Galax, all sources agree that he was a unique individual both professionally and personally. Remembered as gregarious, Dr. Cox was the opposite of his wife, who was very quiet and reclusive. Unlike the previous owners, Dr. and Mrs. Cox seldom hosted large parties, but they did enjoy having close friends and relatives in their home. Gladys Cox was interested in having a beautiful home and grounds,

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however, and a relative, Atoile Berry, was responsible for the interior design of the house. Mrs. Cox was also an avid golfer and enjoyed improving the garden that Rita Cox had installed.<sup>14</sup>

Dr. Cox was extremely committed to his practice, which was an outlet both for his outgoing personality and keen mind. He enjoyed hosting hunting and fishing parties at his river cabin, but reveled in his daily contact with patients. Dr. Cox was unlike other physicians in methodology, however, and ran his office in his own idiosyncratic way. Many in Galax recall that each hour on the hour, he would yell into the waiting room, "Anybody for shots?" whereupon all those requiring a shot would line up for the procedure.<sup>15</sup>

Dr. Cox's practice was located in an office on Grayson Street, only a few blocks from his home, for many years. The exam room featured a fireplace that encouraged a congenial atmosphere. Dr. Cox cultivated a loyal group of patients who found him to be an astute diagnostician. He could quickly surmise the nature of his patient's ailment and whether his methods would be helpful or if more sophisticated treatment at a large hospital was necessary. Dr. Cox's long-time friend, Douglas Turner, recalls that "he was a one of a kind and a real country doctor. Folks lined up to get treatment, medicine, and advice. He gave it all and freely."<sup>16</sup>

In 1952, Dr. Cox founded the non-profit Blue Ridge Hospital and Clinic. Characteristically choosing to manage a venture in his own way, Dr. Cox established his clinic shortly after Dr. Robert Waddell opened his own, private, thirty-bed hospital in 1950. The clinic, which was housed in a one-story, brick building across Grayson Street from Dr. Cox's office, was organized along a long hall with wards on either side. The facility took both emergency and maternity cases with the assistance of a second doctor and a nurse. After several years, the clinic came under the management of a group of local doctors and became known as Galax General Hospital, which was eventually consolidated, along with the Waddell Hospital, into Twin County Community Hospital in 1974.<sup>17</sup>

After the establishment of the clinic, Dr. Cox closed his downtown office and created a new office space in the former first floor apartment in the northwest corner of his home. This small office, which could be accessed off the back porch without entering the main house, was the site of many medical and political decisions. It was here that the late Governor Mills Godwin came to visit and talk politics with Dr. Cox.<sup>18</sup>

Complete with an exterior entry and tiny waiting room and bathroom, Dr. Cox held regular hours here each evening after his work at the clinic. This office, like his earlier downtown office, had a fireplace. The location of an office in his home was somewhat unconventional by the 1950s, but was typical of Dr. Cox's unique method. Dr. Cox estimated in

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1985 that he had delivered over 4,000 babies and removed at least that many pairs of tonsils during his nearly fifty year career in Galax. Dr. Cox continued seeing patients in his home office six days a week through the early-1980s and had worked seven days a week for most of his career. He often saw fifty to sixty patients a day.<sup>19</sup>

Dr. Cox's career was driven by his desire to serve his community, his multi-faceted interests, and his willingness to move from one large project to another. A few years after the establishment of his clinic, Dr. Cox was elected to the Virginia House of Delegates. His 1962 campaign against a popular incumbent showcased Dr. Cox's natural talents at public speaking; he ran unopposed in 1964. Serving from 1962-1965, he undertook a variety of issues, particularly the establishment of Grayson Highlands State Park (originally called Mt. Rogers State Park). His interest in the state parks in southwestern Virginia was an extension of his love of hunting and fishing along the New River. The establishment of the park was the primary impetus for his running for office, but he was also deeply concerned about improving the condition of the Galax and Grayson County schools.<sup>20</sup>

His public service was not limited to his political career. Dr. Cox was well-known in Galax for his generosity. He accepted barter and trade goods for his medical services long past the era when such a practice was common, making him immensely popular with Galax's low-income citizens. Dr. Cox gave generously to his church, the First United Methodist, and was a member of the service fraternity, the Masonic Lodge for over fifty years. In 1983, he donated \$25,000 to establish a scholarship fund for pre-medical students at his alma mater, Emory and Henry University. Dr. Virgil Cox died on August 2, 1991.<sup>21</sup>

**Architectural Context**

The architecture of the Cox House is in the eclectic Colonial Revival style that grew out of the 1876 Centennial Exposition and the 1893 Columbian Exposition. At the Columbian Exposition, the colonial past as residential architecture was promoted by the State Buildings. The Virginia Building, for example, was replica of Mount Vernon.<sup>22</sup>

Other states took a more liberal interpretation of "colonial" by designing buildings that were not replicas, but contained an artful variety of gables, gambrels, and columned porches. It was this model, where classical ornamentation was applied to houses in the earlier Queen Anne form, that was widely popularized in plan books, magazines, and by architects. Replacing sawn and turned ornamentation were Palladian windows, Tuscan columns, and other classical motifs. The house form, however, remained exuberantly asymmetrical with projecting bays, polygonal sections, and complex hipped roofs.<sup>23</sup>

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The popularity of Colonial Revival was fed by the social upheaval prevalent at a time when massive immigration, industrialization, and racial tension placed stress on American society. Comforted by the nostalgia suggested in the style, Americans built untold numbers of Colonial Revival dwellings across the country from the turn of the twentieth century through about 1915 when they began to be replaced by the bungalow and with more literal Federal and Georgian Revival houses of the 1920s. Although found in cities, towns, and rural areas alike, the largest and most architecturally elaborate examples in the South are often found in the burgeoning railroad towns across the region.

Galax was just such a railroad town. Its growth had been intense since the Norfolk and Western railroad built its terminus into the speculative community. Fueled by the timber industry, Galax during the 1910s was in a major period of growth. While many of the houses built during this period were modest dwellings with equally modest stylistic motifs, the new town was home to several wealthy real estate investors, business owners, industrialists, bankers, and others. These citizens built new dwellings in a larger scale with a greater degree of architectural sophistication. The Cox House is an excellent example of these large, sophisticated houses from the first fifteen years of the town's existence.

Much of the middle-income residential development in Galax during its early history was located to the west of the business section and West Stuart Drive holds several of the largest and most resplendent early examples. In fact, next door to the Cox House is a house similar in architectural, physical, and historical stature: the Captain J. B. Waugh House. Home to one of the early developers of Galax, the Waugh House is brick and does not feature as many Queen Anne-inspired forms as the Cox House, but it is a clearly articulated example of early Colonial Revival architecture with a double-tier porch and complex roof. Marking the importance of both of these houses to the town is the 1914 booklet entitled, *Galax: Largest Ten-year Old Town in Virginia*. A two-page spread in this publication features photographs of nine large dwellings along with nine of the town's most prominent businessmen. The houses vary from good examples of the modest Queen Anne and Colonial Revival houses found in the neighboring countryside, to more architecturally complex Queen Anne and Colonial Revival dwellings that were more often associated with wealthy town residents.

The inclusion of the Cox House in the above publication illustrates that during its early years, it was considered to be one of the finest houses in Galax. Today, the house remains significant to the architectural heritage of the town and is one of the best examples of early Colonial Revival architecture in Galax. The house maintains a high degree of architectural integrity, which extends to its interior.

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<sup>1</sup> 1908 Courthouse Foundation, *Bicentennial Heritage of Grayson County, Virginia, 1793*, (Walsworth, Inc., 1995), 87 and Paul Kapp, "Galax Commercial Historic District National Register Nomination, 1998," Roanoke Regional Historic Preservation Office.

<sup>2</sup> *First Annual Catalogue of Galax High School, Session 1906-1907*, electronic version, available at [www.ls.net/~newriver/va/ghs1906.htm](http://www.ls.net/~newriver/va/ghs1906.htm)

<sup>3</sup> Ed Cox, "Pioneers, Ghosts, Bonaparte, and Galax," in *Golden Anniversary of Galax Virginia, 1906 - 1956*, Galax Public Library and *Hill's Virginia Gazetteer and Classified Business Directory, 1911*, electronic version, available at [www.ls.net/~newriver/gray1911.htm](http://www.ls.net/~newriver/gray1911.htm)

<sup>4</sup> Cox, "Pioneers, Ghosts, Bonaparte, and Galax"; "The History of Galax," [www.ingalax.net/galax\\_history.htm](http://www.ingalax.net/galax_history.htm), *Hill's Virginia Gazetteer and Classified Business Directory, 1917* (Richmond: Hill Directory Company, 1917), Virginia Room, Roanoke Public Library; and *Directory of the Town of Galax, Virginia, 1925*, Matthews Memorial Museum, Galax.

<sup>5</sup> Wrightman D. Roberts, *Galax: Largest Ten Year Old Town in Virginia*, c.1914, Matthews Memorial Museum; Grantee Index, Map 241, Map 244, Map 286, Deed Books 39, page 288 and 44, page 96, Grayson County Register of Deeds; and *Galax: Life and Times in the History of America, 1906 - 1976*, Galax Public Library.

<sup>6</sup> 1910, 1920, and 1930 Soundex, Virginia Room, Roanoke Public Library; Mary Guynn, interview by Sherry Joines Wyatt, 3 October 2003; and Worth Cox, telephone interview by Sherry Joines Wyatt, 13 October 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Deed Books 44 page 96 and 46 page 386, Grayson County Register of Deeds, Independence.

<sup>8</sup> James L. F. Parker, ed., *God, the Tree, and Thee*, Vol. 1 (Hillsville: privately published, 1985), 62 and *Directory of Galax, 1932*, Matthews Memorial Museum.

<sup>9</sup> Cox, interview and Guynn, interview.

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<sup>10</sup>. Trust Book 18, page 270 and Deed Book 72, page 153 Grayson County Register of Deeds.

<sup>11</sup>. Mag Poff, "Hospital Founder Dies at 86," *The Roanoke Times*, 4 August 1991; Cox Obituary, *Galax Gazette*, 7 August 1991; H. Douglas Turner, letter to Sherry Joines Wyatt, 24 October 2003; and Cox, interview.

<sup>12</sup>. Cox, interview and Guynn, interview.

<sup>13</sup>. *Directory of Galax, 1932* and Dr. F. Clyde Bedsaul "Early Memories of Galax," first published in the *Galax Gazette*, 26 July 1956, electronic version available at [www.ls.net/~newriver](http://www.ls.net/~newriver)

<sup>14</sup>. Guynn, interview.

<sup>15</sup>. Ibid. and Cox, interview.

<sup>16</sup>. Guynn, interview and Turner, letter.

<sup>17</sup>. Poff; *Galax: Life and Times in the History of America, 1906-1976*; and Guynn, interview.

<sup>18</sup>. Turner, letter.

<sup>19</sup>. Guynn, interview ; Cox, interview; Turner, letter; and Poff.

<sup>20</sup>. Poff and "Tenative Plans for State Park at White Top, Mt. Rogers," *Galax Gazette*, 22 November 1962.

<sup>21</sup>. Guynn, interview and Poff.

<sup>22</sup>. Catherine Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1990), 417.

<sup>23</sup>. Ibid.

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## 10. Geographical Data

### Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Dr. Virgil Cox House is shown as Lot 72 in Block 53, delineated by a heavy, solid line on the accompanying tax parcel map.

### Boundary Justification

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The boundary of the property encompasses the entire acreage historically associated with the property.

Dr. Virgil Cox House (VDHR#113-5034)  
406 West Stuart Drive  
Galax, Grayson County

Photographer: Sherry Joines Wyatt

Date of photographs: June 7, 2003

The original negatives are located at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond

1. View of Cox House from southeast [VDHR neg. # 21006; photo 3 of 37]
1. View of Garage (upper level) and Cox House from northwest [VDHR neg. # 21006; photo 29 of 37]
2. View of Boxwood Garden from west [VDHR neg. # 21006; photo 22 of 37]
3. View of stair, First Floor entry hall [VDHR neg. # 21007; photo 16 of 37]
4. View of fireplace & built-in bookcases in north parlor [VDHR neg. # 21007; photo 9 of 37]
5. View of former doctor's office from kitchen [VDHR neg. # 21007; photo 37 of 37]
6. View of entry hall; south parlor on left [VDHR neg. # 21008; photo 10 of 37]
7. View of second floor hall [VDHR neg. # 21008; photo 13 of 37]

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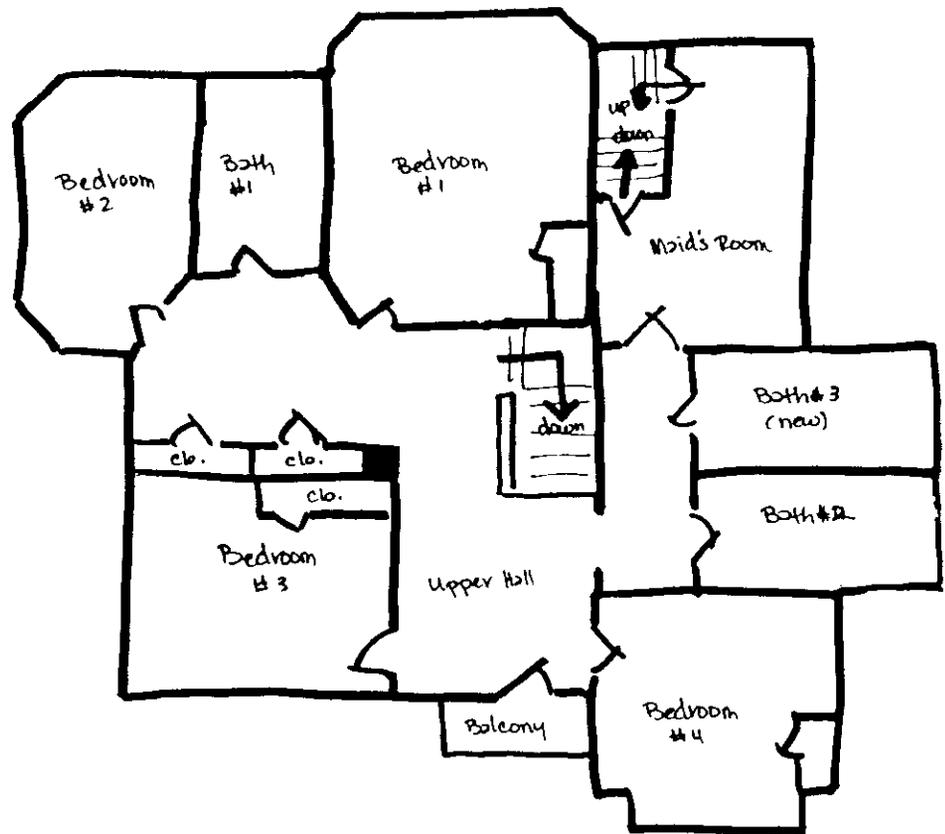
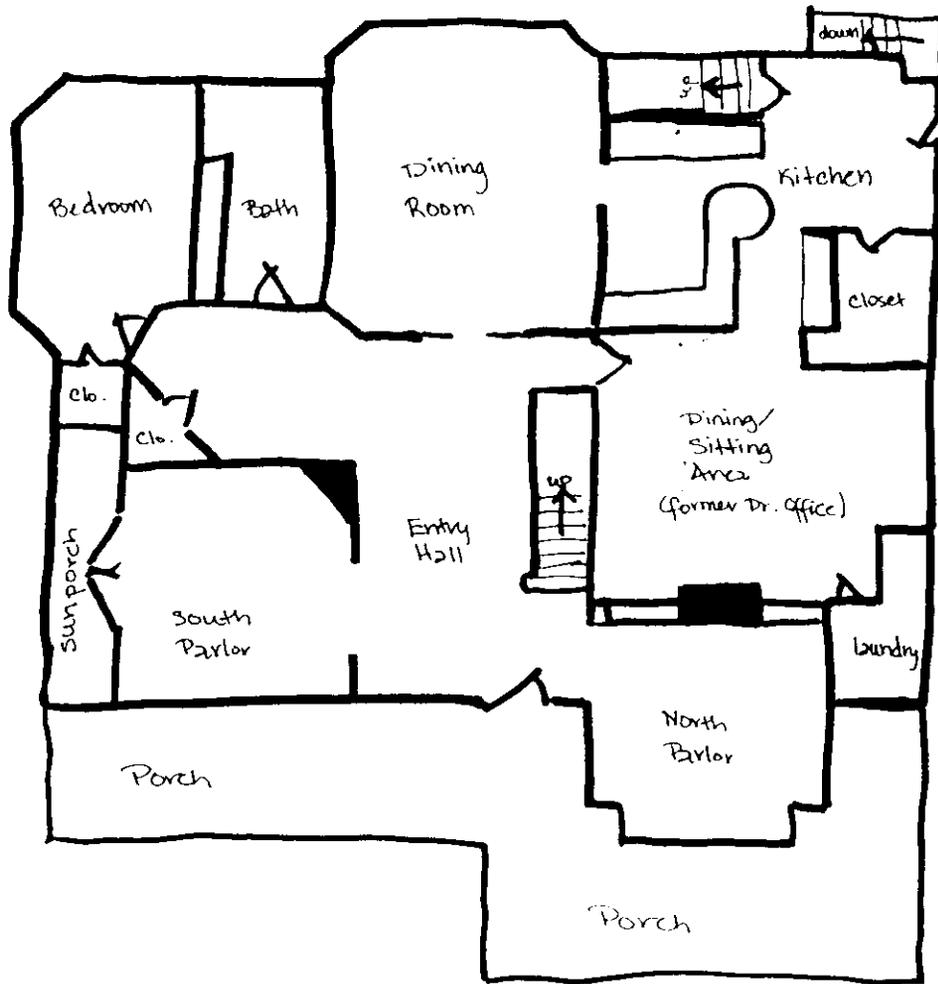
Section number 8 Page 16

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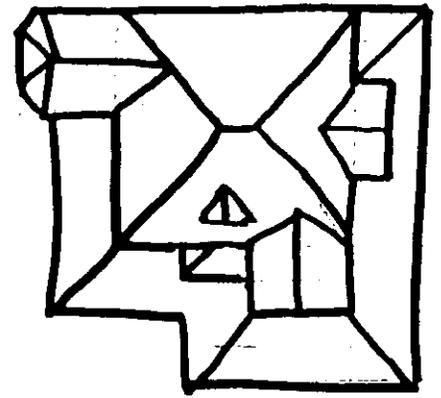
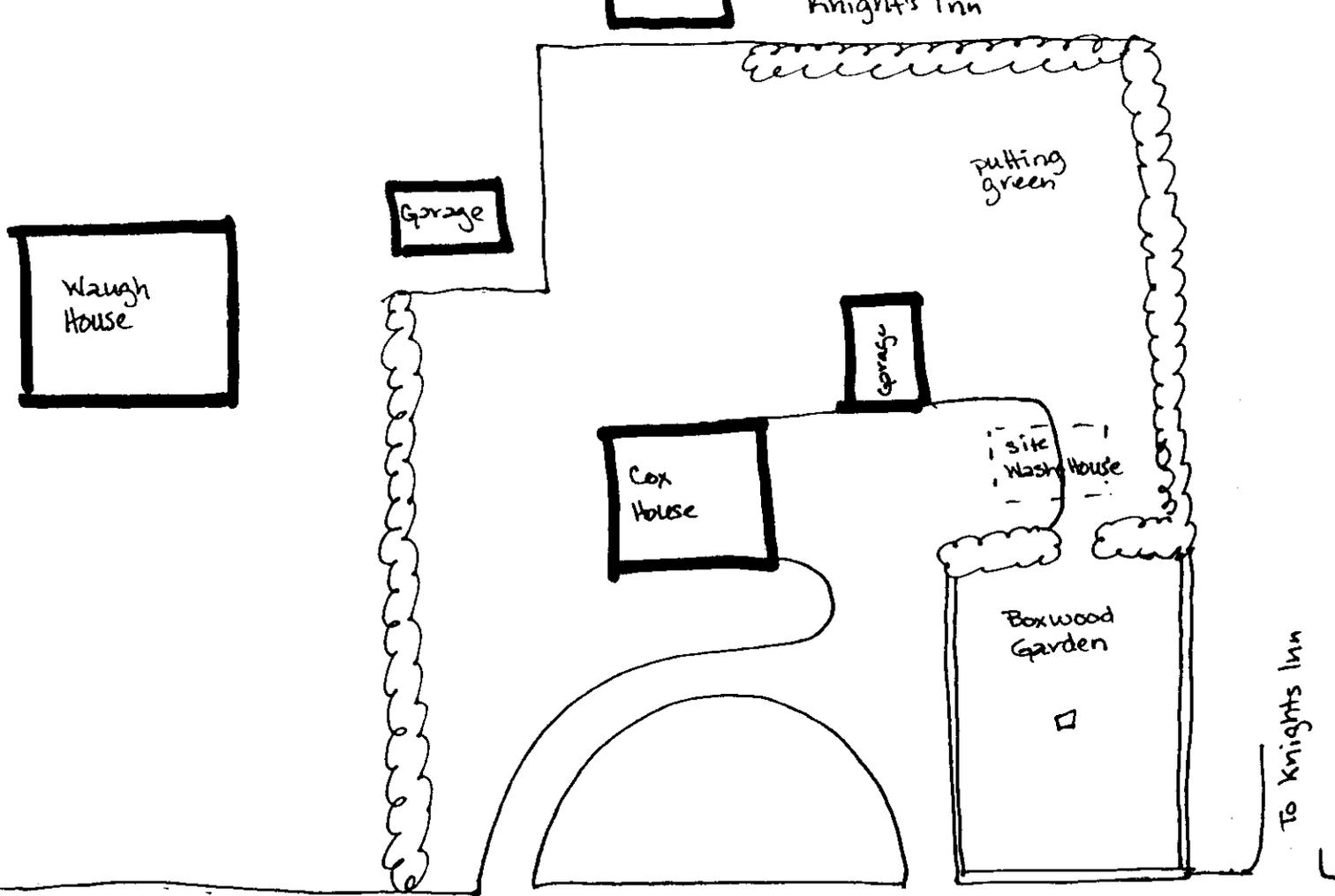
Galax, Grayson County, Virginia

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8. View of southeast bedroom on second floor [VDHR neg. # 21008; photo 20 of 37]



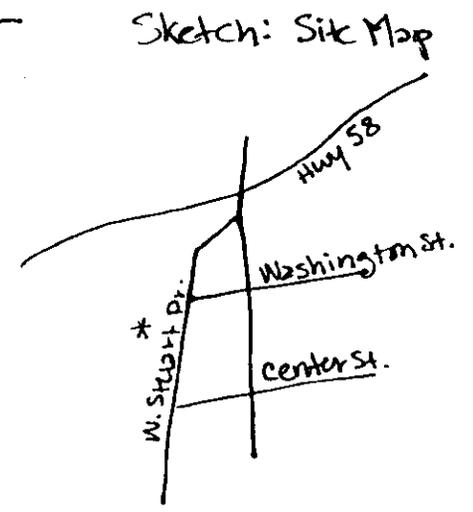
Dr. Virgil Cox House  
 406 W. Stewart Dr.  
 Galax, Grayson Co., VA  
 - Sketch Plan -



Sketch: Roof Plan

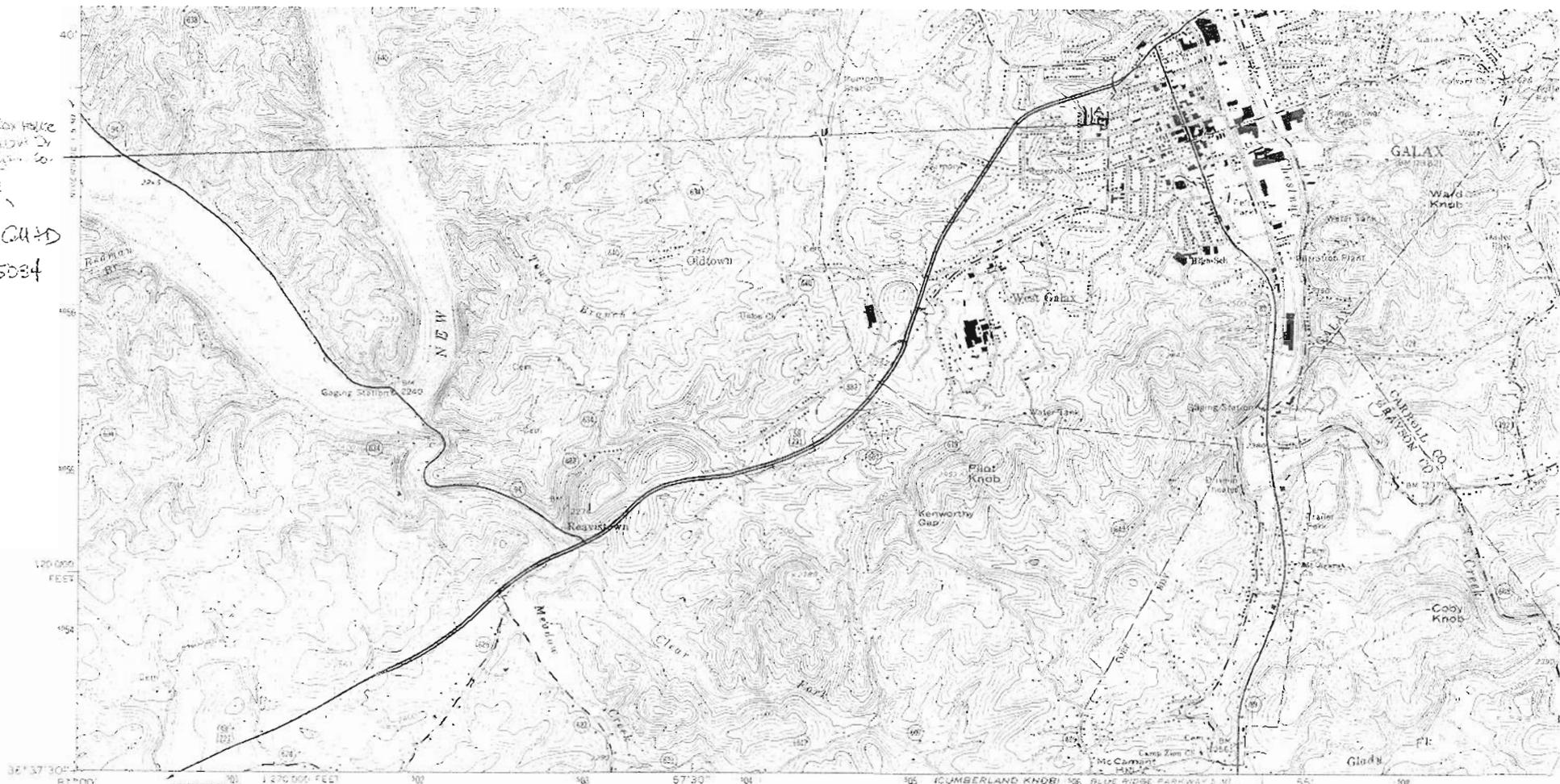
W. Stuart Dr.

Sketch: Site Plan  
 Dr. Virgil Cox House  
 406 W. Stuart Dr.  
 Galax, Grayson Co.



Sketch: Site Map

2000' BOX FENCE  
 400' W. ROAD BY  
 1/2 M. S. 100  
 2) 50627 E  
 115 71-21  
 641 44 04 10  
 # 113-5034



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

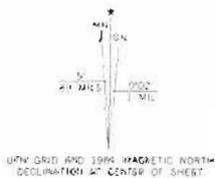
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1963. Field checked 1965

Polyconic projection. 10,000-foot grid ticks based on Virginia coordinate system, south zone.  
 3000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 17, shown in blue.  
 1927 North American Datum.

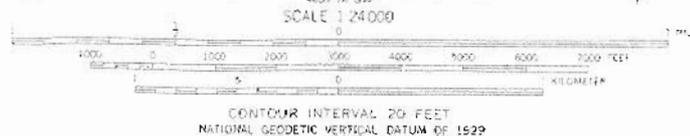
To place on the predictive North American Datum 1983, move the projection lines 9 meters south and 16 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks.

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is uncheckered.

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State Reservations shown on this map.



UTM GRID AND 1983 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



THIS MAP COMPLES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
 FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22002  
 AND VIRGINIA DIVISION OF MINERAL RESOURCES, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA 22903  
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

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 WITH COMMISSIONERS OF VIRGINIA, FROM AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS  
 TAKEN 1962 AND 1965. THIS INFORMATION NOT ON  
 MAP, EDITED 1984