

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Liberia #155-0001

VLR 12/18/79
NRHP 3/20/80

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

8601, 8653, 8663 Portner Ave.

8800 Mathis Avenue

~~8700 Centreville Road~~

CITY, TOWN

Manassas

~~NOT FOR PUBLICATION~~

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Eighth (Herbert E. Harris, II)

STATE

Virginia

VICINITY OF

CODE

51

COUNTY

CODE

(in city)

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

DISTRICT
 BUILDING(S)
 STRUCTURE
 SITE
 OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC
 PRIVATE
 BOTH
PUBLIC ACQUISITION
 IN PROCESS
 BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

OCCUPIED
 UNOCCUPIED
 WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
 YES: RESTRICTED
 YES: UNRESTRICTED
 NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE
 COMMERCIAL
 EDUCATIONAL
 ENTERTAINMENT
 GOVERNMENT
 INDUSTRIAL
 MILITARY
 MUSEUM
 PARK
 PRIVATE RESIDENCE
 RELIGIOUS
 SCIENTIFIC
 TRANSPORTATION
 OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

I. J. & Hilda Breeden

STREET & NUMBER

8817 Portner Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Manassas

STATE

Virginia 22110

VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Prince William County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Manassas

STATE

Virginia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS (3) (See Continuation Sheet #1)

TITLE

(1) Historic American Buildings Survey

has this property been
determined eligible? Y N

DATE

1936

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Liberia is a two-story, five-bay brick house located on a tree-planted hill on an undeveloped parcel of land in the city of Manassas about one mile north of the business district. The brick is laid in Flemish bond on the front, and in four-course American bond on the ends and back. Unfortunately the brickwork has been poorly repointed. Interior walls are also brick. The roof has parapet gable ends with corbeled shoulders and is covered with asphalt shingles. A single, concealed chimney is located in each gable end. A modern two-story colonnaded portico runs part way across the front of the house, and there is a one-story, enclosed frame porch with a gable roof on the rear of the house.

Exterior decorative features include a molded brick cornice with a saw-tooth design, quarter-round chimney closet windows in the gable ends, jack arches over the windows and a circular-arched doorway (front and rear) with a semicircular fanlight. Doorways front and rear are recessed and paneled. Large initials "WI" appear on the northeast gable end in glazed bricks.

The plan of this single-pile farmhouse is that of an "I" house with a modified central passage. The open-well stair is located to the rear and left of the central passage. There is a small study in the room behind the stair, and the kitchen is located in the corresponding room on the right of the central hall behind the dining room.

Liberia's noteworthy interior woodwork includes a keyed, elliptical molded arch in the central passage leading to the concealed stair. The arch is ornamented with pendant-like motifs. Both the paneled front and rear doors are surmounted by a keyed, molded semicircular fan arch. A molded baseboard decorated with a circular cutout design is found both in the central hall and the parlor (southwest room). The open-string stair has a molded banister, a slender colonette newel, two rectangular balusters per tread, and scrolled brackets. Symmetrically molded trim with turned cornerblocks is found throughout the house. The doors in the hall and throughout the house are six-panel.

The mantel in the southwest room consists of a molded shelf supported by consoles resting on pairs of slender, reeded, engaged columns, which rest on molded rectangular blocks. A diagonally reeded architrave surrounds the fireplace. The frieze has a dog-ear motif in all four corners.

The dining room, or northeast room, contains a plainer mantel--an architrave surround and a molded shelf supported on either side by a single engaged column resting on a molded rectangular base.

There are no surviving early outbuildings at Liberia except for a stone spring house located about fifty yards northeast of the house. There is a cemetery north of the house which contains the graves of members of the Weir family who died during the mid-19th century. Behind the house are the remains of an early 20th-century dairy barn, a small tenant house, and other 20th-century farm buildings.

The property being nominated consists of a rectangle measuring about 1800 feet by 1200 feet. The remainder of the property will soon be developed. Construction will probably affect in part the present tree-lined approach to the house and the pond to the southeast of the house beside the present driveway.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES

c. 1825

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

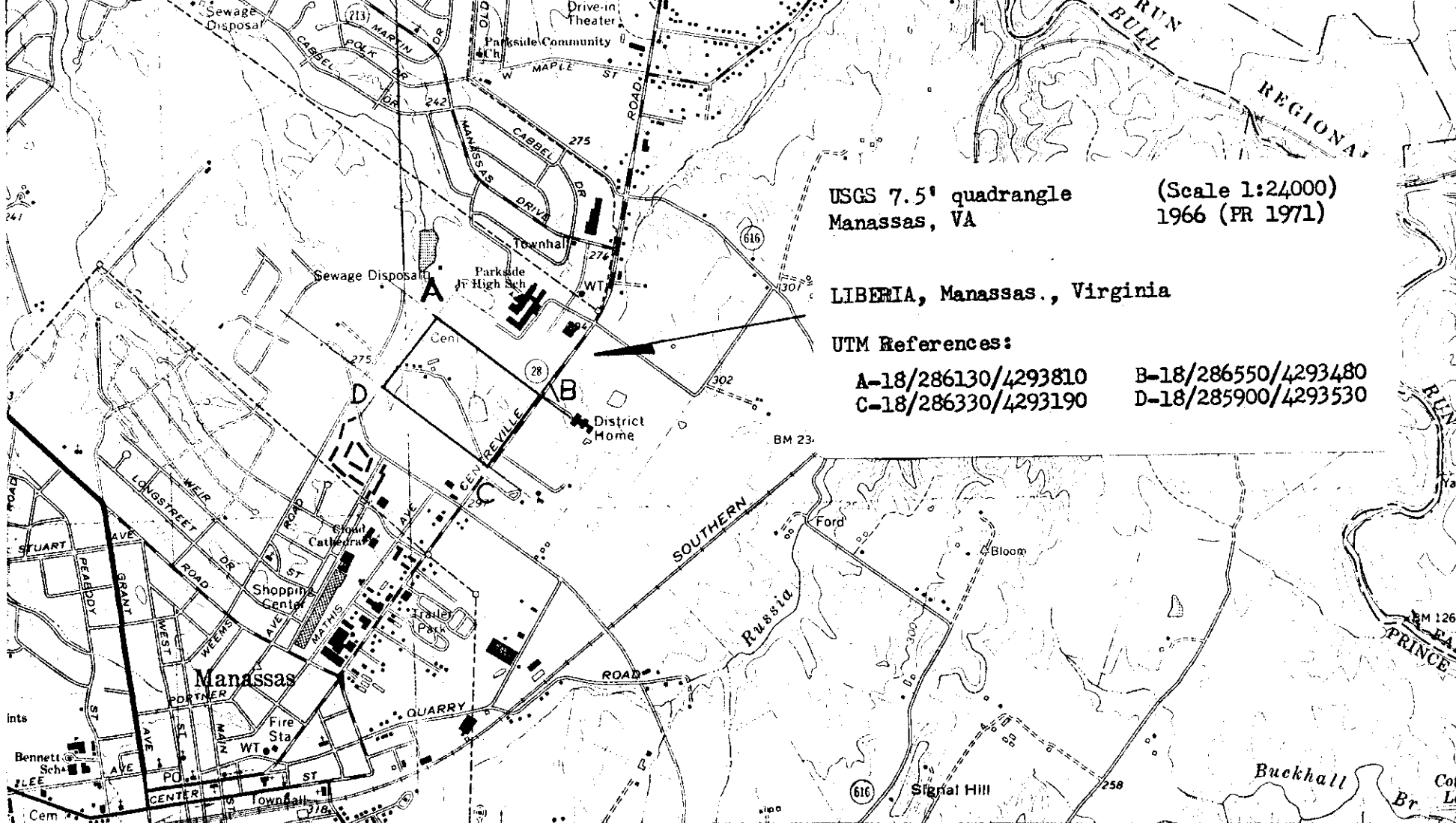
Liberia is an early 19th-century brick, Federal farmhouse which is noteworthy for its architecture, its fine interior trim, and its excellent state of preservation. Liberia has its origins with the renowned Carters of Virginia. The property achieved prominence during the Civil War when it was used as headquarters by both Confederate and Union forces. Both Presidents Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis, in addition to other statesmen, visited Liberia during the War.

Liberia, a sophisticated rural, Federal-style brick farmhouse with antecedents in the classic Tidewater plantation house, is one of the few remaining houses of its type in Prince William County.¹ The land was originally part of vast acreage patented in 1724 by the agent for the Northern Neck proprietary, Robert "King" Carter, who patented as much as 90,000 acres in the present counties of Prince William, Fauquier and Fairfax in the names of his sons, grandsons and others. The 6,730-acre Lower Bull Run Tract was divided into 12 plantations, each named after a sign of the zodiac. Liberia, the only mansion from this tract which still retains its name, was built on the 1,660-acre "Libra" plantation in about 1825 by William Weir, whose wife Harriet Bladen Mitchell was a granddaughter of Robert "King" Carter. Liberia and Ben Lomond are the only remaining "Carter" houses of the dozen or so that existed in this region during the late 18th and 19th centuries. Portisi, Pittsylvania, Sudley, Sunnyside, Bleak Hill, Hazel Plain, Red Hill, Woodland and Mountain View were all Carter houses of comparable, if not finer, quality that no longer exist.

Although it is presently located within the boundaries of Manassas, which was incorporated in 1873,² Liberia was standing well before the early days of Manassas, which had its origins in the 1850s as a junction on the Orange and Alexandria Railway. The house withstood the ravages of the Civil War; when Manassas was burned twice, in March 1862 by General J. E. Johnson and in August 1862 by General Jackson, Liberia alone was left standing amidst the burning rubble.

It was during the Civil War period that Liberia achieved prominence. In June 1861, General P. G. T. Beauregard became commander of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia at the First Battle of Manassas. Beauregard founded Camp Pickens on Liberia's grounds and, between July and September 1861, he made the Weir house his headquarters. President Jefferson Davis visited Liberia on July 21, 1861 when, after the First Battle of Manassas, he met with Generals Johnston and Beauregard for a council of war.

About a year later, Liberia was used as Union headquarters by General Irvin McDowell, then commander of Union forces in Northern Virginia. President Lincoln and Secretary of War Edwin Stanton visited McDowell at Liberia on June 19, 1862 after McDowell had suffered injuries in a fall from his horse. Two days later, Secretary of State William Seward is said to have visited McDowell at Liberia.



USGS 7.5' quadrangle
 Manassas, VA (Scale 1:24000)
 1966 (PR 1971)

LIBERIA, Manassas., Virginia

UTM References:
 A-18/286130/4293810 B-18/286550/4293480
 C-18/286330/4293190 D-18/285900/4293530

290 000 FEET (234) INDEPENDENT HILL 9 MI. 17 MI. TO INTERSTATE 95 286 27'30" 287 (INDEPENDENT HILL) 5561 III NW 289 25'

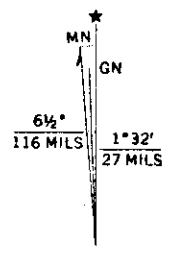
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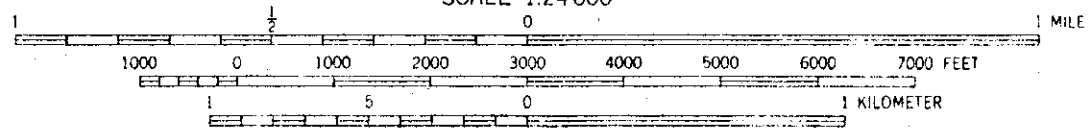
tum
 /stem, north zone
 ticks.

d field lines where
 formation is unchecked

buildings are shown
 photographs
 d



UTM GRID AND 1966 MAGNETIC NORTH
 DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
 DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
 FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
 AND VIRGINIA DIVISION OF MINERAL RESOURCES, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA 22903
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST